



1. ASHURBANIPAL DINING WITH HIS QUEEN

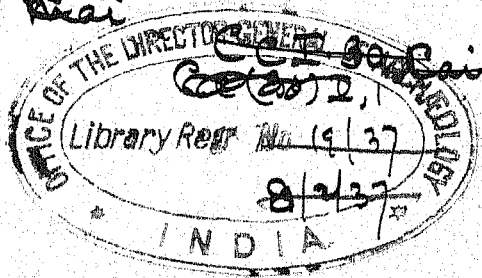
A scene in the palace garden at Nineveh about 650 B.C. Note the punkah, fly-whisks, and napkins in the hands of the attendants. Among all the representations of cruelty and violence on the Assyrian monuments, this is said to be the only peaceful and happy one.

BIBLE AND SPADE

An Introduction to
BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

By

STEPHEN L. CAIGER, B.D.



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PREFACE

THE aim of this little book is very simple: it is to give a general survey, as complete and up to date as possible within the prescribed limits, of the main discoveries of archaeology as far as they concern the Old Testament, especially on its historical side.

Where opinion differs about the weight or significance of the evidence, I have tried to give what I believe to be the general consensus of responsible scholarship, rather than to press any particular point of view.

In the hope that readers may be stimulated to further study of this fascinating subject, the sources from which information may be obtained are indicated somewhat fully, for recent arrangements made by the National Lending Library now make these sources accessible to all.

S. L. C.

WIRKSWORTH, 1935





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ABBREVIATIONS AND TECHNICAL TERMS

Very few of these are used in this volume, but the following may be permitted for convenience:

Century = a hundred years; e.g. 'the ninth century B.C.' signifies 899-850-800 B.C.

Millennium = a thousand years; e.g. 'the second millennium B.C.' covers 1999-1500-1000 B.C.

Pentateuch = the first five Books of the Old Testament traditionally called 'The Books of Moses' or 'The Law', i.e. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

J, E, D, P in the Biblical references, e.g. (Gen. 1 P), (Gen. 2 J), &c., indicate the original documentary source of the Pentateuch to which the passage in question is ascribed by the critics, thus giving a criterion of its weight as evidence.

J = the 'Jehovistic Source'.

E = the 'Elohistic Source'.

These two sources are the earliest, generally dated as eighth or ninth century B.C.

D = the 'Deuteronomic Reviser', dated in the seventh century.

P = the late 'Priestly Editor', dating from the Exile (sixth and following centuries).

For further information see the various 'Introductions to the Old Testament'.

LXX = Septuagint, that is, the famous translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek made by the Jews of Alexandria in the third century B.C., thus giving a clue to a very early Hebrew text of the Scriptures.

P.B.A.S. = Proceedings of the Biblical Archaeological Society.

J.P.O.S. = Journal of the Palestine and Oriental Society.

J.E.A.S. = Journal of the Egyptian Archaeological Society.

W.O.P. = *Wonders of the Past* (edited by J. A. Hammerton. Amalgamated Press. 1934).

INTRODUCTION

By DR. A. W. F. BLUNT, *Bishop of Bradford*

THIS book supplies a real need. Some of the more famous archaeological finds, such as the Moabite Stone or the Taylor Cylinder, have been familiar to readers of modern Biblical histories: and students know where to look for information about others such as the Amarna Tablets or the Stele of Merenptah. But there was no single manual covering the field of Biblical archaeology in such a way as to be of help to the general student or to those who had to teach Scripture in schools.

Moreover, it is unfortunate that the recent discoveries in Palestine, which have shed so interesting a light on the earlier history of the Hebrew invasion, have at times been misused in the interests of an unscholarly prejudice against the work of those who are vaguely called 'the higher critics', or even 'the so-called higher critics': and we have been treated to such statements as that 'archaeology has disproved the higher criticism'.

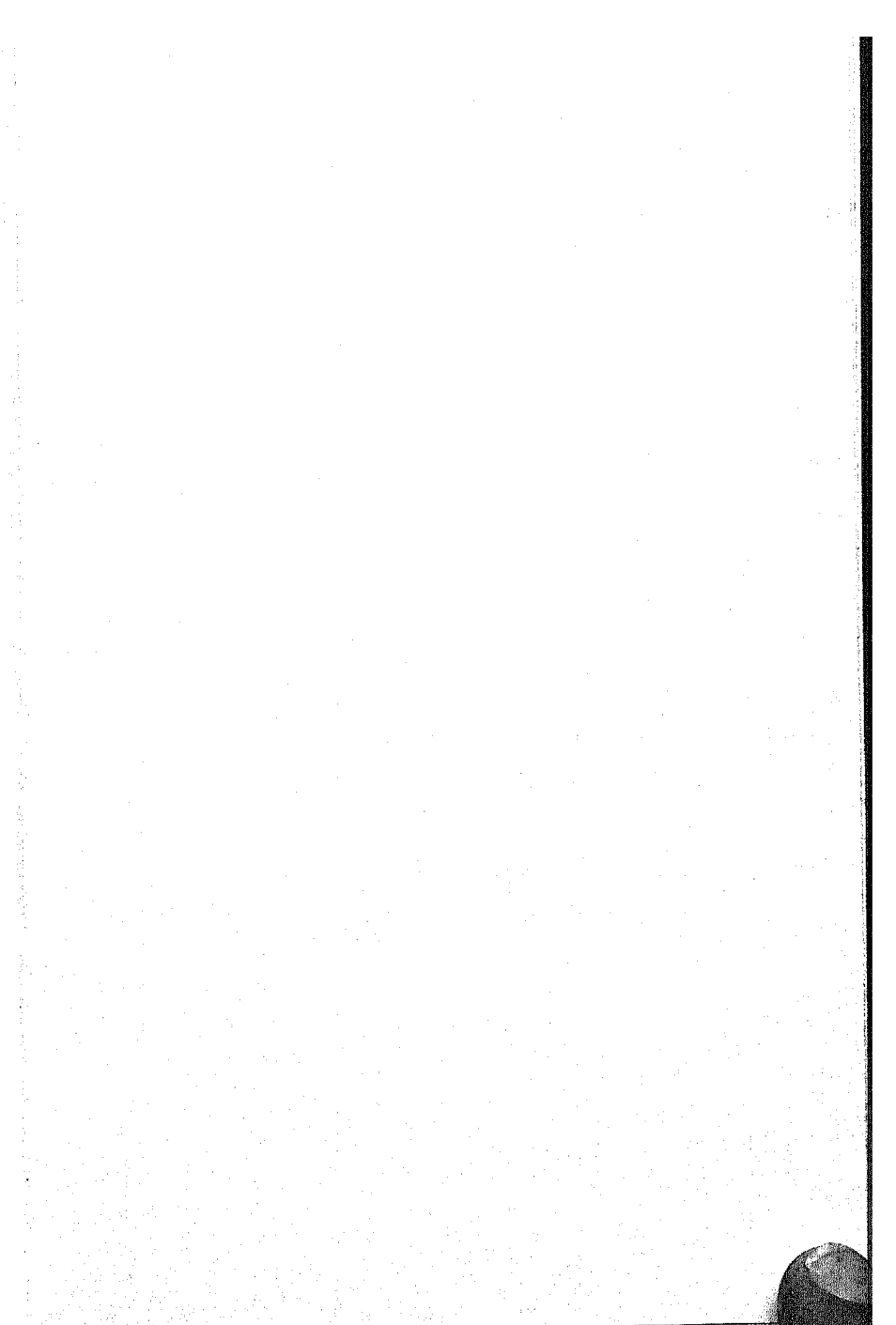
It is a serious mistake thus to set archaeology and criticism against one another. Both are needed as helps to understand the Bible story. Without higher criticism, Old Testament history would still be largely a chaos: criticism has introduced order and development into the story. Archaeology does not disprove criticism: it only contributes additional data for the problems which criticism has to solve; and the finds of the excavator have to be set side by side with the literary evidence of the Bible itself, in order to obtain what every student, critic, or archaeologist desires, a trustworthy account of the way in which the history and religious growth of the Hebrews prepared for the coming of Christ.

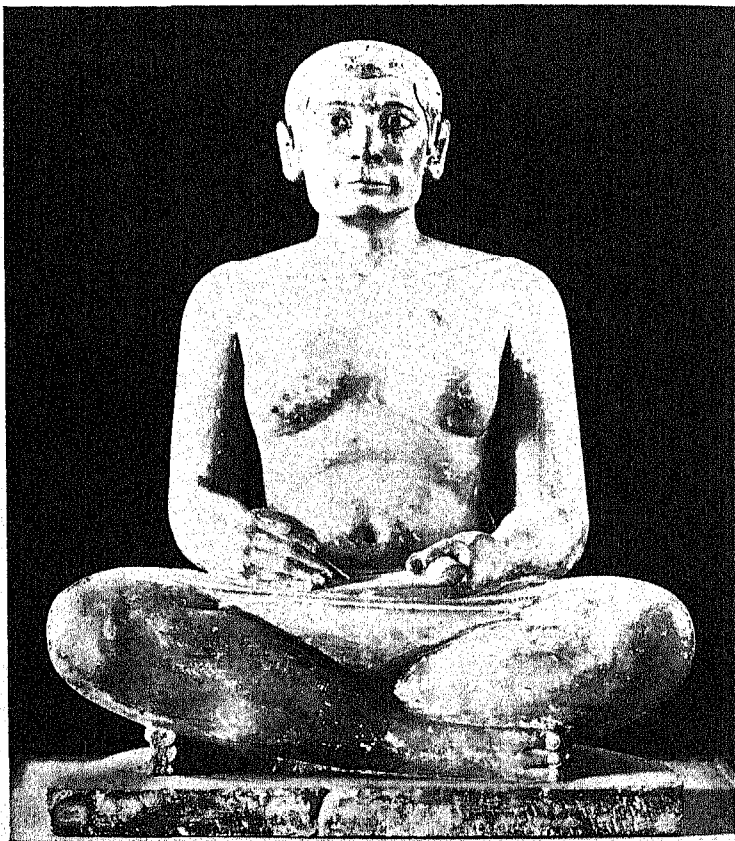
In this book Mr. Caiger, without any cheap disparagement of the great work done by criticism, has given, in popular form, a synopsis of Biblical archaeology which ought to be of real service to clergy, teachers of Scripture, and general students; and as such I am glad to be allowed to commend it.

In one important particular, viz. the early date for the Exodus, I am convinced that the case is a strong one. I have always felt that the archaeological indications were in its favour, and that the Biblical evidence which suggested a later date was of questionable force. In opting for the early date Mr. Caiger is abreast of what seems to be the rising tide of opinion among historians.

ALFRED BRADFORD

HORTON HALL
BRADFORD





2. AN EGYPTIAN SCRIBE

A statuette found near the Serapeum of a date about 2500 B.C.
Note the unmistakable roll of papyrus, and the specially
shaped desk on which he writes.

PART I

ANCIENT TRADITIONS

I

HEBREW WRITING AND LANGUAGE

SINCE the Old Testament is a collection of written documents, it will be convenient to consider first what archaeology has to tell us about the art of writing among the Hebrews.

Assuming the truth of the ancient tradition that Abraham led his countrymen forth from Babylonia about the time of Hammurabi (c. 2100 B.C.),¹ we find them entering history at a time and a place where writing had already been a commonplace of existence for at least two thousand years. Long before Hammurabi chiselled his famous code of laws on a slab of stone, the original Sumerian inhabitants of Babylonia had developed the clumsy yet efficient style of writing which we call 'cuneiform', and which persisted as the most widely used system in the Near Eastern world for over three thousand years.

All ancient writing evolved from pictures. The process can be most clearly traced in Egyptian,² where the hieroglyphic characters were painted on a smooth surface such as stone or papyrus, and retained their pictorial appearance to the end.

In Babylonia,³ however, the almost complete absence of stone or papyrus compelled the scribe to make use of clay, so plentiful in that well-watered land. The clay was shaped in

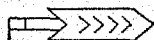
¹ See below, pp. 35 ff.

² For the Egyptian hieroglyphs see A. H. Gardiner's beautiful *Egyptian Grammar* (1927).

³ For Babylonian and Assyrian cuneiform, with an account of its decipherment, see L. W. King, *Assyrian Language* (1901).

the form of a slightly convex tablet, inscribed with writing, and then baked. This produced, as time has shown, the most indestructible type of written record yet found among the ancients, but it involved an entirely different technique of writing from that which obtained in Egypt. At first an attempt was made to draw linear pictures upon the clay, and many tablets inscribed in variations of this 'archaic' style have been found. But very soon the scribe found it more convenient just to press the edge of his square-ended stick or *stylus* into the soft clay, and so to build up his characters, not by outline, but by a series of triangular or wedge-shaped (cuneiform) indentations.

In cuneiform, therefore, it is exceedingly difficult to perceive any pictorial resemblances, although in many cases we are able to trace the evolution of the characters. Thus the sign for SAGAZ, or warriors, is at first sight only a meaningless jumble of wedges, but we have it also in its archaic form, a clear outline of a short two-edged sword in a scabbard.



One feature was common both to Babylonian cuneiform and to hieroglyphics: they were not alphabetical, but syllabic scripts. That is to say, each individual character represented not a single letter, but a whole syllable, or even a whole word. The best-known modern example of this is in Chinese, with which indeed the Sumerian cuneiform is said to have a close relationship. Syllabic cuneiform is thus one of the most difficult scripts for the student to master: not only are there hundreds of separate signs for various syllables and words, but in each case a sheer effort of the memory unassisted by any pictorial resemblance is needed to identify the minute and monotonous combinations of wedges which form the signs.

In spite of all this, cuneiform conquered the world. The language of the Sumerians died, but their method of writing was passed on from nation to nation until it was in use not only in the clay countries of Mesopotamia but in the rocky highlands of Asia Minor, Cappadocia, and Persia. It even won a foothold in Egypt, where in the fifteenth century it is found displacing hieroglyphics as the official diplomatic script.¹ More remarkable still, it survived for a thousand years the Semitic alphabet itself, that epoch-making invention which so radically simplified all writing.

Cuneiform, then, was a familiar feature of everyday life in and around Ur of the Chaldees at the time when we first hear of Abraham. It would accompany him all along the trade-route through Syria to Canaan, where cuneiform inscriptions of a date far anterior to Abraham have been found. In short, it would seem certain that *if* the Hebrews of the second millennium, like most of the peoples among whom they moved, had scribes of their own, cuneiform must have been the script they used.

It is noticeable, however, that the Bible makes no mention of writing amongst the Hebrews until the time of Moses, some centuries later than Abraham. In Exodus 24⁴ (E) we are told that *Moses wrote all the words of the LORD*, and the statement is constantly repeated henceforward. Archaeologically speaking there is no reason for questioning Moses' acquaintance with the art of writing, or the feasibility of his having inscribed his Laws on tables of stone after the manner of Hammurabi.

But the question, What script would he have been most likely to use?, has been variously answered. As one brought up at the court of the Pharaoh, and *learned in all the wisdom*

¹ As evidenced in the Tell el Amarna tablets, see pp. 96 ff.

of the Egyptians, he must have had some knowledge of hieroglyphics. But this style of writing, though admirably adapted to the Egyptian language, was never (so far as we know) employed in transcribing any other.

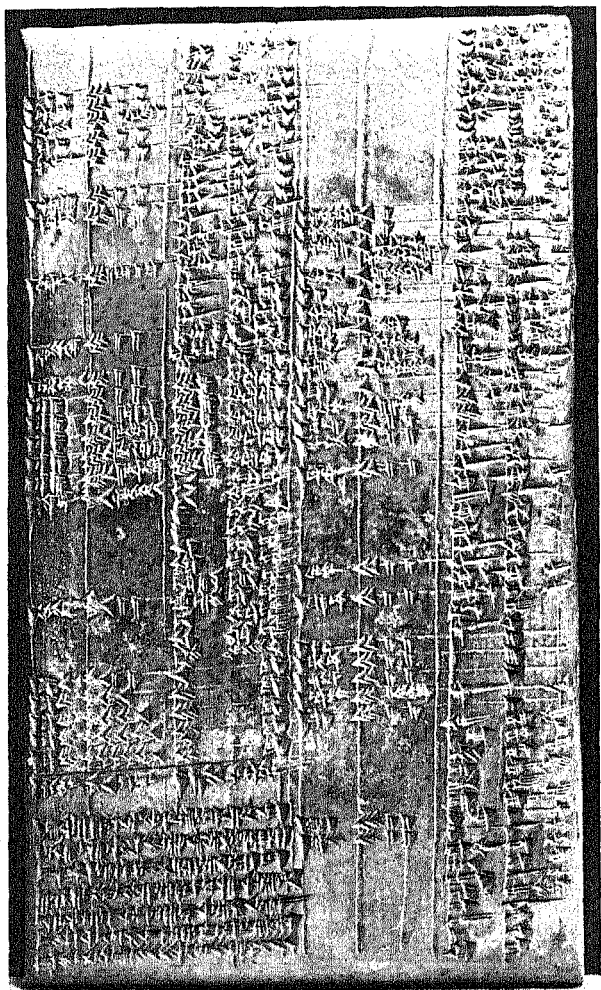
The claim of cuneiform as the script of Moses and of the earliest Hebrew writers has been strongly urged by many scholars. 'If Moses was taught a Semitic writing, which seems natural considering his origin and position, it is obvious that he learnt Babylonian cuneiform—a writing which allowed him to have intercourse with the Semitic world of his time.'¹ The Tell el Amarna tablets, written close to the Mosaic era, show that Canaanite-speaking people could write in cuneiform, and transcribe their native language where necessary in that script.

Quite recently indeed examples of this have been found among the Ras Shamra tablets, believed to belong to the Tell el Amarna period. Some of these tablets are written entirely in a Canaanite language, and in the cuneiform script. In this case, however, it is surprising to learn that the cuneiform is no longer syllabic, but (apparently under Phoenician influence) has been simplified for use as an alphabet. 'The decipherment of this script, which represents the Phoenician or Hebrew alphabet of actually 1400 B.C., is one of the most interesting achievements of the present century.'²

It is not necessary to suppose that the rank and file of the Hebrews could read what was written. Doubtless to them writing still seemed almost miraculous—the writing was the writing of God (Ex. 32¹⁶ E). It is interesting here to compare the expression on the Rosetta Stone, where hieroglyphs are called 'the writing of divine words, written by the god Thoth himself'.

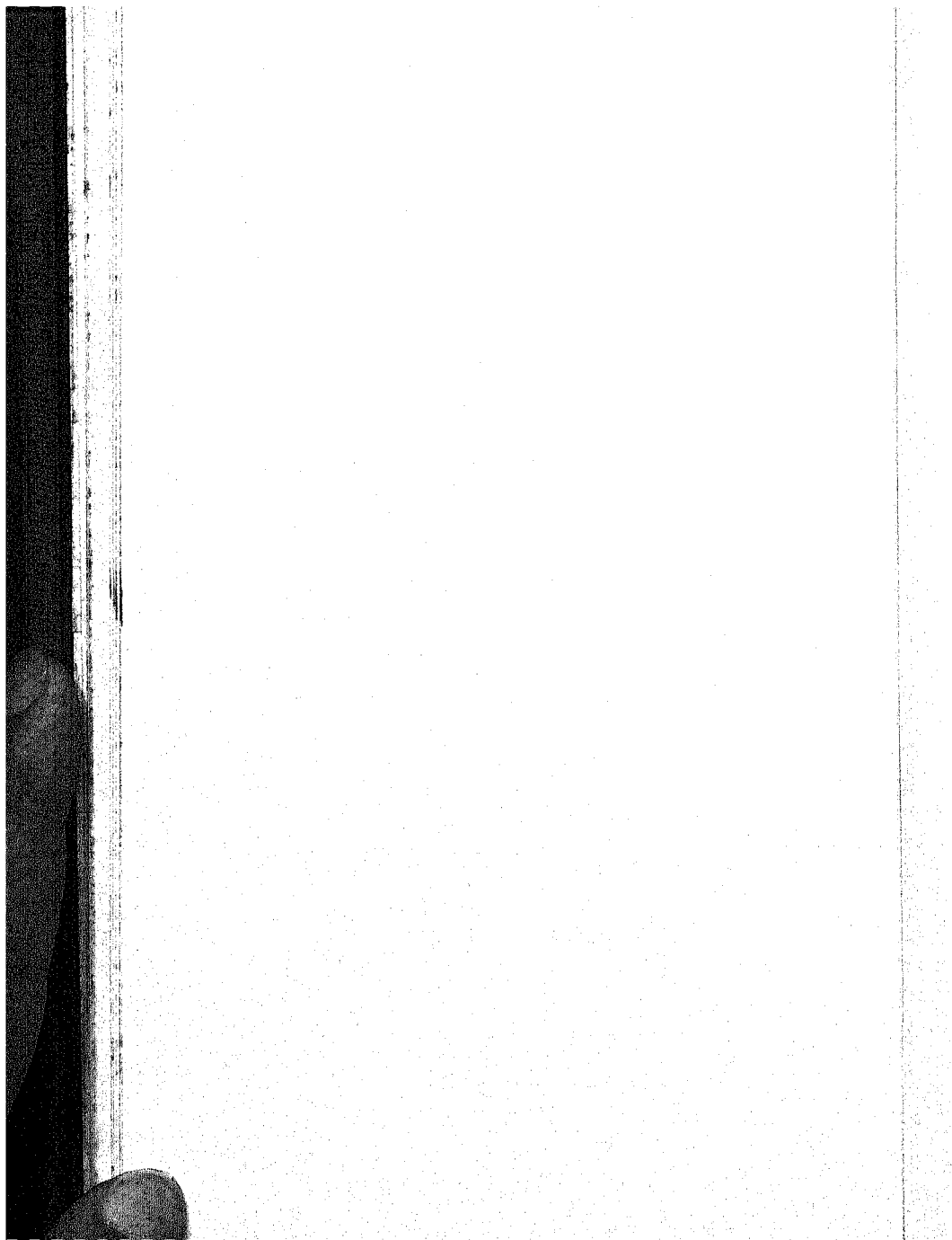
¹ E. Naville, *Was The Old Testament written in Hebrew?* (1913).

² C. Marston, *The New Knowledge and the Old Testament* (1933).



3. A 'PAGE' FROM A BABYLONIAN DICTIONARY

A copy made in the days of Nehemiah (it is dated 442 B.C.) of a much earlier tablet containing the names, pronunciation, and meaning of certain cuneiform characters.



INVENTION OF THE ALPHABET

Moses, however, may have had simpler scripts than cuneiform at his command. At Serabit el Khadem in Sinai Sir Flinders Petrie discovered Semitic inscriptions dating back beyond the Exodus, and written actually in a rude *alphabetical* script, apparently derived from hieroglyphs. 'These Serabit inscriptions', he says, 'show that common Syrian workmen were familiar with the art of writing in 1500 B.C., and finally disprove the hypothesis that the Israelites could not have used writing.'¹ Similar inscriptions have since been found in Palestine itself, as, for example, on a potsherd at Gezer, an ostrakon at Beth-shemesh, and the notable ewer recently found at Lachish. Many scholars regard these Sinaitic inscriptions as exhibiting the 'missing link', as it were, in the evolution of the Phoenician alphabet from hieroglyphics. 'Some Sinaitic miners imitated Egyptian, giving Canaanite values and names to the letters, e.g. *aleph* for oxhead, *beth* for house, &c. . . . Thus the alphabet was invented in the Sinaitic peninsula: thence carried to South Arabia: then to Canaan: and eventually to Phoenicia.'²

Recent discoveries indeed have shown that the alphabet is a far more ancient invention than was commonly supposed. The Minaean inscriptions of south Arabia, where Moses may have dwelt with his father-in-law the priest of Midian, are dated by many scholars as early as 1400 B.C., and exhibit a well-developed alphabetical writing. Some are of the opinion that the Hebrews of the pre-Conquest era 'must have originally employed this Minaean script in place of the Canaanite-Phoenician'.³

¹ Sir F. Petrie, *Researches in Sinai* (1906).

² A. T. Olmstead, *Palestine and Syria* (1931).

³ F. Hommel, *Ancient Hebrew Tradition* (1897).

So that in the light of recent research, far from questioning the ability of Moses to write, we may even conjecture that he had progressed beyond clumsy syllabic scripts to an alphabetical style of writing not dissimilar from the Hebrew of a later age. In fact, 'the elder natural scepticism regarding the existence of a Semitic alphabet in the second millennium, which led conservative scholars like Naville¹ to postulate cuneiform autographs of the Mosaic laws, is now despatched for good'.²

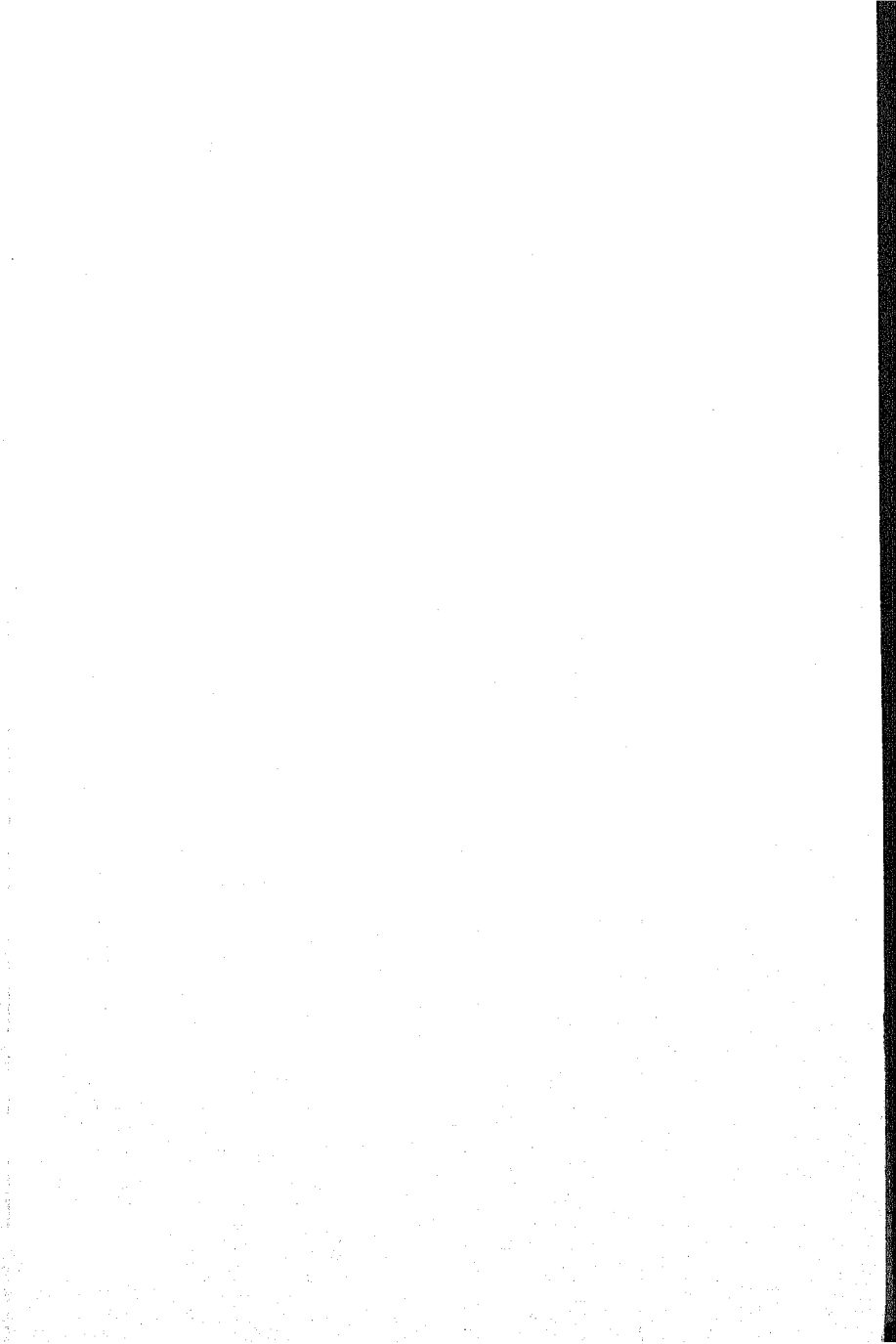
The evidence for an actual Hebrew or rather Canaanite script of Phoenician origin from the fourteenth century onwards is scanty but sufficient. The Moabite Stone (described fully on p. 135) of about 860 B.C. shows it in a highly developed form. Working back from that, recent excavations in Samaria have revealed inscribed jar-handles and ostraka (smooth potsherds) of a somewhat earlier date.³ At Gezer, Macalister discovered a primitive calendar dated by Albright as early as 928 B.C., which takes us back almost to the days of Solomon.

One of the most important finds in this connexion is the now famous **Sarcophagus of Akhiram**, discovered by Montet at Byblos on the Syrian coast. This sarcophagus is a large and well-preserved stone coffin-case, beautifully sculptured in relief, showing King Akhiram on his throne with a banquet spread before him. Around the throne stand seven serving and four mourning figures. The whole shows Syrian workmanship under Egyptian influence. But what concerns us here is the surrounding inscription stating that

¹ E. Naville, *Was the Old Testament written in Hebrew?*, where he contends that all the ancient records of the Hebrews were kept in Babylonian cuneiform, and were not translated into Hebrew until the time of Ezra.

² J. A. Montgomery, *Arabia and the Bible* (1934).

³ J. W. Jack, *Samaria in Ahab's Time* (1929).





Wellcome Archaeological Research Fund.

4. THE LACHISH EWER

Recently found in a ruined temple at Tell Duweir, and dated about 1300 B.C. The writing on the neck of the vessel supplies a hitherto missing link in the evolution of the alphabet. From Sir Charles Marston, *The Bible is True* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, Ltd.).

'This is the sarcophagus which Ippis-Baal, son of Akhiram King of Byblus, made for his father as his resting place for eternity: and cursed be he that desecrates it'. This inscription, which is dated as early as 1250 B.C., is the oldest known example of a Phoenician inscription, and indicates that already in the neighbourhood of Palestine the older cuneiform had met with the rival which was ultimately to prove the 'Mother of Alphabets'.¹ Another recent discovery of the greatest interest is the ewer found at Lachish (Tell Duweir) by J. L. Starkey in 1934. On its neck is an archaic alphabetical inscription of the Phoenician type, 'acknowledged by all leading authorities to be the connecting link between the alphabetic script of Serabit and the script on the Sarcophagus of Akhiram'.²

Of Hebrew inscriptions³ in the strict sense, that is to say, written by Hebrews in their own language, there are none, save the isolated word or two on the jar-handles and ostraka mentioned above, earlier than the well-known Siloam Inscription (described on p. 154) of 702 B.C. Somewhat strangely no royal inscriptions of the Hebrew monarchy have survived. Judging by contemporary analogies there must have been many such at one time. Macalister thinks that, owing to their lapses from pure monotheism they were deliberately destroyed by the later Prophets. 'Even the great name of Solomon would not have saved such monuments from destruction. And iconoclasm of this kind, once begun, would continue quite automatically and unreasonably. The mere fact that an inscription was in the Old Hebrew character would be sufficient to condemn it.'⁴ Archaeological

¹ A. T. Olmstead, *Palestine and Syria* (1931), fully describes this sarcophagus.

² C. Marston, *The Bible is True* (1934).

³ For a survey of the inscriptions see J. G. Duncan, *Digging up Biblical History*, vol. ii (1931).

⁴ R. A. S. Macalister, *A Century of Excavation in Palestine* (1926).

confirmation from Hebrew monuments, such as we have from the inscriptions and records of Egypt and Mesopotamia, is therefore unavailable for Biblical history.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE HEBREWS

So far we have discussed merely the script of the ancient Hebrews: to decide what language they spoke is another question.

If, as seems generally agreed, their aboriginal home must be sought in Arabia, then a dialect of Arabic must have been the language they took with them on their emigration into Babylonia. Hommel, rightly appreciating the importance of personal names as preservatives of archaic speech-forms, finds a strong family resemblance between the earliest Hebrew names and those of the Arabic Minaean inscriptions, as well as those of the first Babylonian Dynasty. 'Abram, Sarai, Isaac, Jacob, &c. are definitely Arabic names, and the alternative spelling Abraham, Sarah, can be explained only by Arabic usage.'¹

Subsequent sojourn in Aramaea (Syria, Haran) must have modified this original dialect, so that the patriarchs may be considered as speaking a primitive form of Aramaic. Some scholars consider that they took this Aramaic tongue with them through Canaan to Egypt, and that they retained it until the Conquest. 'The Hebrews of the patriarchal period were still half Arabs, and it was not until they had permanently settled down in the Promised Land that they adopted the Canaanitish tongue (i.e. 'Hebrew') in place of their original language'.¹

The more general opinion is that the language of the patriarchs became so modified by their sojourn in Canaan that

¹ Hommel, *Ancient Hebrew Tradition* (1897).

it had already become a primitive form of Hebrew even before their descent into Egypt. Here, according to Professor Yahuda's recent researches, it largely dropped all traces of its Babylonian ancestry, and became deeply tinged with Egyptianisms. 'The Hebrew language . . . was retained by the Hebrews in Egypt, and under the influence of the Egyptian language was expanded, enriched, and embellished in sufficient degree to create the necessary conditions under which the literary language of the Pentateuch was matured.'¹

There is no archaeological evidence, however, that Hebrew had become a *literary* language at this early date, that is, before 1400 B.C.

Meanwhile the ancient Aramaic language, which had been left behind as it were in Syria and Mesopotamia, had also been growing up. Casting off the shackles of cuneiform it eventually adopted a simplified alphabet, written on vellum or some similar substance. An Assyrian relief in the British Museum shows the simultaneous use of this Aramaic side by side with Babylonian cuneiform as early as the eighth century. Its commercial advantages were obvious, and from this time forward Aramaic rapidly gained ground as the international language of the East.

The last phase of Biblical Hebrew as a spoken language may perhaps be dated from the beginning of the fourth century B.C. The appearance of Aramaic chapters within the later books of the Old Testament is significant, as also are the letters of the fifth-century Jewish colony at Elephantine in which Aramaic is exclusively used. It is probable that by the time of Ezra the Hebrew Scriptures had to be translated for the ordinary Jew into a language he could understand (Neh. 8^{7, 8}).

¹ Yahuda, *The Language of the Pentateuch in its relation to Egyptian* (1934).

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE HIGHER CRITICISM

Crossing over very briefly into the realm of literary criticism,¹ it must be confessed that the archaeologist has done little to help the critic in his search for the original text of the Old Testament. The internal evidence of the Bible itself must still remain the chief criterion for judgement on this point.

Yet, since literary criticism is inevitably involved sooner or later in questions of historical fact, the archaeologist is bound to have his say. In this respect some very weighty attacks have been made by Sayce, Hommel, Naville, Yahuda, and others upon certain positions assumed by the critics, and particularly upon some conjectures subversive of Biblical authority which have been perhaps too freely welcomed by the 'advanced' school. Speaking generally, it is true to say that, though the evidence of archaeology has too often been absurdly over-pressed, yet as a result of the excavations the historicity of the Old Testament stands to-day in far higher estimation amongst impartial scholars than was once the case.

Of the main literary position of the critics, however, namely the composite origin of the Pentateuch and the identification of the original documents, all that can be said is that 'while archaeology has not overthrown the critical position, it is in some details tending to modify it. Sellin in Germany and Welch² in Britain, though avowedly critical in their methods, represent a movement to date the documents earlier than the

¹ For the literary criticism of the Old Testament see Driver's standard *Literature of the Old Testament* (1898), or the more recent *Literature of the Old Testament* (1934), by W. O. E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson.

² See A. C. Welch, *Code of Deuteronomy* (1924), where he gives reasons for dating Deuteronomy several centuries earlier than the orthodox critical date, thus touching the critics in a vital spot.

Wellhausen School had done.'¹ There is a tendency, too, to suspect the existence of very early written sources where hitherto the theory of a merely oral tradition had held the field. Thus Garstang is convinced that the Biblical story of the Conquest in its original form 'must have been derived from still earlier writings almost contemporaneous with the events described, so detailed and reliable is their information'.²

THE SIGNATURE OF MOSES?

As a matter of interest we give below some of the ways in which Moses, on the reckoning of this chapter, might have signed his name. The 'signatures' were supplied to the author by the courtesy of the late Professor E. T. Peet and of Dr. Stephen Langdon.

Modern Hebrew מֹשֶׁה = Mosheh

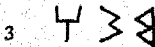
- (1) Babylonian cuneiform of the Tell el Amarna period, 1400 B.C.



- (2) Cuneiform of the type found on the Ras Shamra tablets, 1400 B.C.

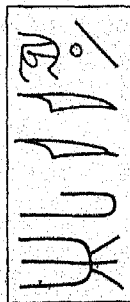


- (3) Script used in the Minaean inscriptions.

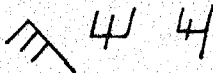


- (4) Egyptian hieroglyphics.

4



- (5) Phoenician script.



¹ C. R. North, 'Archaeology and the Bible', in the *Abingdon Commentary* (1929).

² J. Garstang, *Joshua-Judges* (1931).

II

THE EARLY CHAPTERS OF GENESIS

MODERN archaeology begins with Napoleon Bonaparte, who included a corps of savants in his Egyptian expeditionary force of 1798. His ships, loaded with antiques, were intercepted by the British fleet on their way to France, and most of the booty found its way to the British Museum, where it may still be viewed. Nearly forty years, however, were to elapse before the decipherment of the Rosetta Stone (by the Englishman Young and the French Champollion) in 1830 unravelled the secret of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, and the inscriptions on the idols which had remained dumb for over two thousand years were made to speak.¹ The excavations proceeded,² discovery after discovery stirred the imagination of the public as the almost incredibly ancient past was brought to life, and from the first a very special interest attached to those discoveries which seemed to throw light upon the Bible.

More thrilling even than the Egyptian excavations, from the Biblical point of view, were those of Botta, Sir Henry Layard, and Hormuzd Rassam towards the middle of the century, when the long-forgotten sites of Nineveh, Babylon, and even the Tower of Babel (so it was believed) were found. But to scholars the greatest achievement was the recovery of a whole library of Assyrian books in the palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh. True, the books were written on clay tablets in a queer-looking, wedge-shaped script which no one could read, but what had been achieved with hieroglyphics must be possible with cuneiform too.

¹ It was the Rosetta Stone which, with its parallel columns in Egyptian and Greek, provided the clue to the decipherment of hieroglyphics. W.O.P.250. ² For Egyptian antiquities in general see W.O.P., *passim*.

The decipherment of cuneiform, in the absence of a Mesopotamian Rosetta Stone, proved a tedious and difficult business, but at length the genius of Rawlinson succeeded where many had failed, and in 1850 the first long cuneiform inscription, that of the Black Obelisk, was translated into English, revealing the first Biblical name to be discovered by archaeology—'Jehu the son of Omri', King of Israel.

Excitement rose still higher when Rassam discovered at Nineveh in 1854 some fragments of an ancient Babylonian legend of Creation strongly reminiscent of that in the Book of Genesis. And when George Smith deciphered in 1871 the beginning of a cuneiform story of the Flood the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper sent him out to Nineveh immediately with a thousand pounds in his pocket to find the other half of the story. In 1873 the whole of the now famous Gilgamesh Flood Epic was published, and George Smith's *Chaldaean Account of Genesis* became a Victorian best-seller. Its gist has been embodied in every commentary¹ on Genesis ever since, a fact which will excuse the somewhat cursory treatment of the subject here.

THE CREATION (Gen. 1-2³ P, 2⁴-end J)

It will be noticed from the above scriptural references that there are two different versions of the Creation Story, an early form (J) and a much later one (P). A similar phenomenon is found in the many Babylonian versions which have come to light. The Gilgamesh Epic discovered by George Smith is written in a highly developed metrical form dating only, perhaps, from the eighth century, but fragments of far

¹ e.g. W. H. Bennett, *Genesis* (Century Bible). For an elaborate discussion see Jeremias, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East* (1911), together with more recent discoveries discussed in S. Langdon, *Sumerian Epic of Creation* (1915), and indeed any work on Biblical archaeology.

older forms of the legend have been discovered. At Sippar was found a fragment self-dated as 'the eleventh year of King Ammizaduga' (1966 B.C.); at Nippur a tablet dated by its discoverer, Hilprecht, at 2100 B.C.; and oldest of all the famous six-column tablet published by S. Langdon in 1915, known as the *Sumerian Epic of the Creation and Paradise*, of a date perhaps as early as 3000 B.C. The latter, despite its antiquity, is in a highly literary metrical form, indicating an antecedent original even more archaic, so that we may well suppose that the archetype of the Creation Story so familiar to us from Genesis is almost as old as civilization itself.

The publication of these Babylonian legends has made it abundantly clear that they have a definite blood-relationship with those in the Bible. There are, of course, Creation and Flood stories from all over the world,¹ and many of them have points in common with Genesis. But the resemblances between the Biblical and the Babylonian versions are much more remarkable than that, as we shall see. So that even without the tradition that the Hebrew people originally lived in Babylonia, we should have been forced to notice a distinct Babylonian element in their earliest culture.

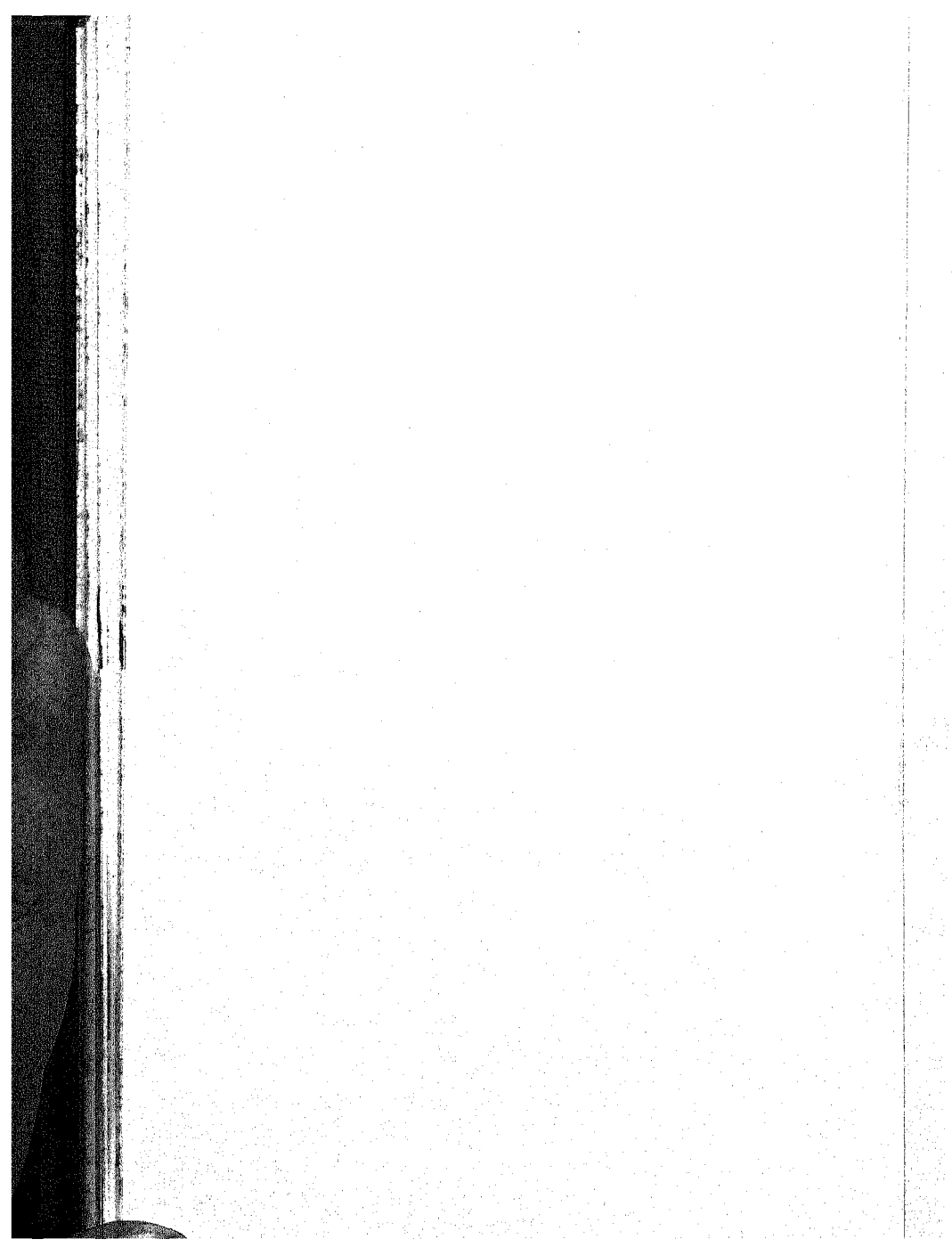
Yet the differences between the Biblical and the extant Babylonian legends are sufficiently marked to indicate other influences in the development from the original archetype. It may be that the Hebrew version of the legend is older even than the Sumerian in some of its details, and Yahuda has produced weighty evidence to show a predominant *Egyptian* colouring of the literary form assumed by these legends in the Pentateuch. In any case, the religious genius of the Hebrews has raised the original stories to a spiritual and moral level as far above the Babylonian versions as Jerusalem is above the

¹ Collected in Frazer's *Folklore in the Old Testament* (1918).



5. A SUMERIAN 'EPSTEIN'

Found at El Obeid near Ur of the Chaldees, and dated a thousand years earlier than Abraham. It is the portrait of a priest named Kur-lil (3000 B.C.).



muddy lowlands of Chaldaea. 'Archaeology demonstrates that though the religion of Israel was built upon the same material foundation as that of other Semitic peoples, it rose immeasurably above them: it assumed as it developed a unique character, and in the hands of its inspired teachers became the expression of great spiritual realities such as has been without parallel in any other nation of the earth.'¹

The Babylonian version of the Creation best preserved to us is contained in the **Seven Tablets of Creation**, whose central figure is the semi-divine hero Gilgamesh.

It begins with the Era before creation,

When the heavens were not yet named,
Beneath the earth—not yet named by name.

It then proceeds to describe a battle among the gods, the bone of contention being Marduk's design to make a world. Eventually Marduk triumphs, slays his chief opponent Tiamat, and cuts her body in two pieces to make what the Bible calls a 'firmament' dividing the new earth and heaven from the destructive waters of Chaos above and below. Here it is to be noted that the Babylonian and the Hebrew conceptions of the universe are very similar: the name Tiamat has even been preserved, perhaps,² in the Hebrew word for the 'Deep', viz. *Tehom*. The Epic runs:

Marduk cleft Tiamat in two like a fish:
The half of her he raised up, and made a covering for the heavens.
He pushed a bolt before, placed watchers here,
Commanded them not to let the waters out.
So the heavens he created.

¹ S. R. Driver, *Modern Research as illustrating the Bible* (Schweich Lecture, 1908).

² Yahuda denies this: the Hebrew *Tehom* = *Tamtu* (ocean), not Tiamat: 'The repeated attempt to establish a linguistic dependence of these stories on Akkadian is completely beside the mark.'

Tiamat in Babylonian legend is frequently represented as a huge dragon, or as accompanied by dragons. We find many allusions to this in the Bible: for instance, *Art thou not it that cut Rahab in pieces, that pierced the dragon?* (Is. 51⁹). *Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces* (Ps. 74¹⁴).¹ The very name Leviathan, or Labbu, appears in the inscriptions:

In heaven the gods ask in haste,
Who will go and kill Labbu?
He let his clouds rise up,
And slew Labbu.

After this, the Babylonian like the Biblical version goes on to describe the creation of the heavenly bodies:

He prepared stations for the great gods,
As stars like to them he placed the constellations.
He lit up the moon to rule the night,
He ordained it as a night body to mark the days:
Monthly for ever to go forth giving light to the land.
At the beginning of the month beaming forth with horns,
To determine six days:
On the seventh day the disk shall be half.

Possibly in the foregoing reference to the phases of the moon we find the rudiments of a six-day working week and a Sabbath. A fragment has indeed been found marking out the seventh day as one for special observance:

Seventh Day, *Nubattum*, an Evil Day:
Cooked flesh he shall not eat: he shall not change his coat:
He shall not put on clean clothes:
He shall pour no libation:

¹ The quotation from Ps. 74 appears almost verbatim in the Ras Shamra tablets. See p. 87.

No oracle shall speak.
 The physician shall not heal the sick.
 On this day all business is forbidden.

If this unlucky day was indeed the forerunner of the Sabbath, it certainly furnishes, as Jastrow observes, 'another illustration of how it came about that the Babylonian and the Hebrew, starting out with so much in common, should have ended by having so little in common'.¹

The actual name Sabbath has been found in the tablets, as *Shabbatum*, 'a Day of Peace of Heart for the gods'. Possibly it was identical with *Shappatu*, the fourteenth day of the month, the day of the Full Moon. It may be that here, rather than in *Nubattum*, we have the germ of the Sabbath, but on the whole it would seem that our 'Day of Rest and Gladness' is a distinctively Hebrew institution.

In the Babylonian version of the creation of Man there are phrases reminiscent of the Biblical *bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh* (Gen. 2²³ J).²

Marduk said,
 Blood will I take, and bone will I build,
 Creating mankind.

In the Sumerian legend the Mother-goddess Mama creates a man 'with the help of Enlil', lord of the gods: with which we compare the Biblical *I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD* (Gen. 4¹ J). We also find traces of the striking phrase *Let us make man in our image . . . in the image of God created He him*² (Gen. 1²⁶ P), as for example:

In accordance with the incantation
 Design a form that man may bear:

¹ M. Jastrow, *Hebrew and Babylonian Tradition* (1914).

² Yahuda gives some striking examples of the use of this phrase in Egyptian. The creation of woman out of Adam's rib is peculiarly in keeping with Egyptian ideas.

The man like Ninib in form,
The woman like Nintud in form shall be.

(Sumerian Hymn to Aruru.)

And again in the Gilgamesh Epic:

Thou, Aruru, hast been created by Gilgamesh:
Now make his counterpart.

When Aruru heard this, she made in her heart a counterpart of Anu.

Such, comparing Babylonian and Biblical Creation stories, are some of the resemblances, the number of which could doubtless be considerably enlarged if we possessed the former in their entirety.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN (Gen. 2^d-3 J)

Previous to the discovery of the Sumerian Epic of Paradise it was questioned whether the Garden of Eden had any very close parallel in Babylonian¹ legend. There existed indeed several examples of the so-called 'Adam and Eve Seal', believed to portray the Fall. On opposite sides of a fruit-bearing tree sit two figures, clothed, and one of them hatted. On the extreme left is a serpent standing on the tip of its tail. The imagery seems confused, if the Story of Paradise is intended, but the seals are now generally taken to represent an episode in the Gilgamesh Epic, where Utnapishtim and his wife assisted by a serpent guard the tree of life against the Hero's depredations. There may, of course, be some remote connexion with the trees of Eden.

The Sumerian Epic, however, forms a definite link. Here for the first time we find Creation connected, as in the Bible, with the Flood, and the Flood with the sinfulness of Man.

¹ It should be noticed that where there is no risk of confusion we use the term 'Babylonian' in its geographical rather than racial sense.

The Age of Innocence is thus described, in language reminiscent of Isaiah:

In Dilmun, the Garden of the gods,
Where Enki with his consort lay,
That place was pure, that place was clean,
The lion slew not,
The wolf plundered not the lambs,
The dog harried not the kids in repose,
The birds forsook not their young,
The doves were not put to flight.
There was no disease nor pain,
No lack of wisdom among princes,
No deceit or guile.

But for some reason ('which is all too briefly defined', says Langdon¹) Enki became dissatisfied with man, and resolved to overwhelm him in a flood. Then follows the story of the Flood, with which we shall deal later, and after the Flood (not *before* it, as in the Bible) we find a solitary survivor, Tag-Tug,² back in the Garden. He is told he may eat of the trees of the Garden:

My king, as to the fruit-bearing plants
He shall pluck, he shall eat.

But there is one tree of which he may not eat, on pain of a curse:

My king the cassia plant approached:
He plucked, he ate.
Then Ninharsag in the name of Enki
Uttered a curse:
The face of Life, until he dies,
Shall he not see.

¹ S. Langdon, *Sumerian Epic of Creation and Paradise* (1915).

² Tag-Tug (Sumerian for *Rest*) = Noah (Hebrew for *Rest*).

Thus death and disease enter into Eden:

My brother, what of thee is ill?
 My pastures are distressed,
 My flocks are distressed,
 My mouth is distressed,
 My health is ill.

Such is the tragic end of the Legend of Dilmun. It is the story of a Paradise on earth, of a forbidden tree, of a Happiness that was lost. But when we look for anything corresponding to the strong moral element underlying the Biblical narrative, we look in vain.¹

THE FLOOD (Gen. 6-9 J and P)

It is when we come to the Flood story that the resemblances between the Biblical account² and the Babylonian become positively startling, as will be seen by the parallel columns set out below. Here the relevant passages of the Revised Version are reproduced in their correct sequence, but to make the parallelism clearer the order of the Babylonian text is slightly varied, and fragments from non-Gilgamesh tablets (bracketed) have been inserted.

THE BIBLE

Genesis 6th.

And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the

BABYLONIAN TRADITION

[At a council of the Gods, Ea unfolded his design]

Ea opened his mouth when he spake, and said unto me his servant: 'Because Inlil hateth me, I will not dwell in your city, I will not tarry longer upon Inlil's earth.'

¹ Yahuda perceives a definitely Egyptian setting in the Paradise story: the Garden is evidently (he thinks) an oasis in the Nile lands.

² For details of the very interesting documentary analysis see the commentaries.

THE BIBLE

earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping thing, and fowl of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Make thee an ark of gopher wood, rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

And this is how thou shalt make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits . . . with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

And I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is in the earth shall die.

But I will establish my covenant with thee;

BABYLONIAN TRADITION

O man of Shurippak, son of Ubaratutu, demolish the house, build a ship.

The ship which thou shalt build, . . . ells shall be the measure of its size, . . . ells shall be designed its breadth and length.

After the design 120 ells high were its walls, the edge of its roof reached 140 ells. I designed the ship, I drew it myself, I built it in 6 stories, divided it into 7 divisions. Its interior I divided into 9 divisions.

Draw for me upon the earth]
a sketch of it. Then will I look
at the sketch and build the ship
... that thou commandest.

Upon you shall the gods bring
rain . . . (making the animals and?)
birds a prey to fishes.

Upon all that may be there]
will I bring destruction and
annihilation.

THE BIBLE

And thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of the fowl after their kind, and of the cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.

And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life . . . on the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

In the selfsame day entered Noah and (his family), they, and every beast after its kind . . . and they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God commanded him.

And the LORD shut him in.

And the waters prevailed, and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fif-

BABYLONIAN TRADITION

Bring in hither thy corn, thy possessions and goods, thy wife, thy male and female family, the artisans, cattle of the field, beasts of the field, as many as eat green food.

Hide therein the beast of the field, the bird of heaven.

For the people I slew beef, I killed lambs daily, with must (?) . . . oil and wine I gave drink to the people like as with river water.

So soon as something of the dawn appeared, there arose from the depths of the heaven black clouds. . . . Adad let a flood of water stream down . . . Adad's storm marched over the heaven, changed all light into darkness. He flooded the land . . . the storm raged stormily.

With all that I had I filled the ship, with all that I had of silver and of gold I filled it. With all that I had of living creatures I filled it. I brought up into the ship my male and female household. Cattle of the field, artisans, all did I bring into it.

I entered into the ship and shut my door.

The waters rose above the mountain, like a battle storm they broke loose upon mankind, so that brother could not see brother.

THE BIBLE

teen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

And all flesh died that moved upon the earth . . . and every living thing was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground . . . and Noah only was left, and they that were with him in the ark.

And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark.

And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged, . . . and after the end of an hundred and fifty days the waters decreased.

And the ark rested . . . upon the mountains of Ararat.

And the waters decreased continually . . .

And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made;

And he sent forth a raven, and it went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. And he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; but the

BABYLONIAN TRADITION

The gods were fearful of the stormy flood . . . they cowered like a dog . . . Ishtar wailed like a travailing woman . . .

Six days and six nights lasted the wind, the storm flood and the hurricane swept the land.

But now I ask, 'Have I borne my mankind so that they should fill the sea like fishes?' The gods of the Anunnaki wept with her, the gods sat bowed down amid tears . . .

When the seventh day came the hurricane ceased, the storm flood which had fought like an army. The sea calmed itself, the storm quieted itself, the storm flood ceased.

The land arose, upon the Mount Nizir the ship laid itself. The Mount Nizir held the ship fast, let it not move away.

I opened the hatchway, the light fell upon my face, I knelt down, sat me down, and wept.

When the seventh day came, I let out a dove and set her free. The dove flew away and returned again, since no place to sit was there, she returned. I let out a swallow and set her free. The swallow flew

THE BIBLE

dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him to the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth; and he put forth his hand, and took her, and brought her in unto him into the ark.

And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came in to him at eventide; and, lo, in her mouth an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; and she returned not again unto him any more. . . .

And Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dried . . .

And Noah went forth . . . out of the ark.

And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; . . . and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled the sweet savour.

And the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

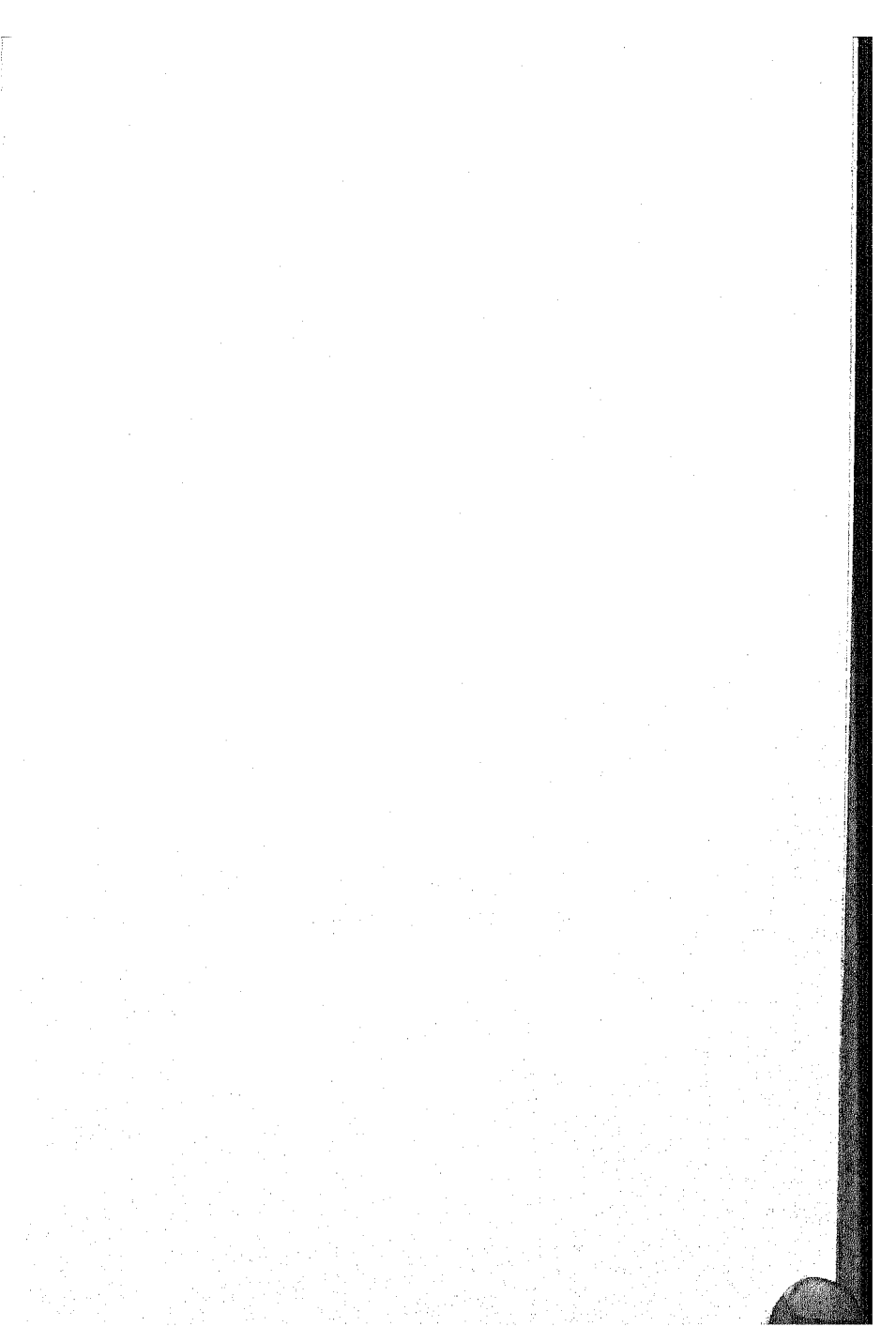
BABYLONIAN TRADITION

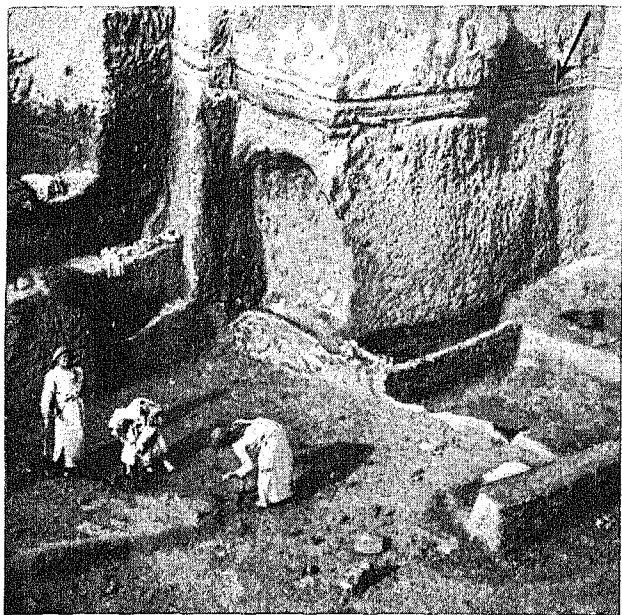
away, and returned again. I let a raven out and set him free. The raven flew away, saw the lessening of the water, flew nearer to it, croaked, and returned not.

Then let I out all to the four winds.

I made a libation on the summit of the mountain, twice seven sacrificial vessels set I up. . . . The gods smelled the odour, the gods smelled the fragrance, the gods assembled themselves like flies above the sacrifice.

[Said Ea], These days by the ornament of my neck I will not forget, I will think upon these days, I will not forget them for ever. The gods may draw nigh to the libation, but Inlil may not go to the libation, because he did not remember, he stirred up the storm flood, and delivered up my mankind to destruction. Thou wise among the gods, hero Bel, . . . upon the sinner lay his sins, upon the blasphemer lay his blasphemy, but [all mankind?] shall not be exterminated. . . .





6. THE ACTUAL FLOOD-LINE

Visible proof of the historic Deluge as found at Kish in Babylonia. Note the eighteen-inch thick stratum of unpierced river sand (marked with an arrow) which the Flood deposited over the earlier civilization about 3200 B.C.

THE BIBLE

While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

BABYLONIAN TRADITION

Why hast thou stirred up a storm flood? Famine might have entered and [devastated] the land.

He grasped my hand, led me off. He led my wife off and made her kneel by my side. He took hold of us, while he stepped between and blessed us. 'Formerly was Ut-Napishtim a man: for evermore shall Ut-Napishtim and his wife be esteemed like unto us gods ourselves . . . Then they brought me far away, at the mouth of the river did they let me dwell.

These parallel columns must be left to speak for themselves in a work which does not pretend to be a treatise on Biblical literature.

THE HISTORICAL DELUGE

To the Deluge as an historical fact, marking an epoch in local history, there are several references in the Babylonian tablets; and the actual names of the kings (or dynasties) which reigned before the Flood are preserved in a fairly consistent tradition. Thus the **Blundell Prism**¹ concludes its list of eight pre-diluvian monarchs with the words:

At Surippak Ubardudu was (eighth) king,

And ruled 18,600 years: one king, five cities.

Eight kings, they ruled 241,200 years.

The Deluge came up upon the land.

After the Deluge had come, the rulership which descended from heaven,

At Kish there was the rulership, &c.

A somewhat later form of the tradition, long known to us

¹ W-B. 444 in the Ashmolean Museum. See *Oxford Edition of Cuneiform Texts*, vol. ii (S. Langdon, 1923).

through the writings of Berosus, and now corroborated by a fragment in the Weld-Blundell collection (W.-B. 62), extends the list of pre-diluvian monarchs to ten, a figure which has been compared with that of the ten pre-Flood patriarchs mentioned in the Hebrew tradition (Gen. 5^{3-nd} P).

Ingenious but unconvincing attempts have indeed been made to trace a correspondence between the actual names given respectively in the Babylonian and Old Testament lists. The reader may like to compare the lists¹ for himself:

<i>Cuneiform</i>	<i>Berosus</i>	<i>Bible</i>
1. Alulim	Alorus	Adam
2. Alagar	Alaparos	Seth
3. Enmenluanna	Amelon	Enosh
4. Enmenanna	Ammenon	Cain
5. Damuzi	Daonos	Mahalalel
6. Ensibzianna	Amempsinos	Jared
7. Enmenduranna	Euedorachus	Enoch
8. Ubardudu	Opertes	Methusaleh
9. Aradgin	Megalaros	Lamech
10. Zinsuddu	Xithuthros	Noah

More sensational in some ways than the finding of the Flood tablets was the discovery in 1929 of traces of the Flood itself. Excavating almost simultaneously Langdon at Kish and Woolley at Ur penetrated the layer of 3000 B.C., and found beneath it a sudden complete break in the pottery deposits, together with an unpierced stratum of sand or clay containing remains of aquatic life, which had clearly been left by a deluge of unparalleled dimensions and persistence.²

Woolley's description of the discovery is well worth quoting:

¹ As reconstructed by S. Langdon.

² S. Langdon, *Excavations at Kish* (1929); C. L. Woolley, *Ur of the Chaldees* (1929). Kish, near Babylon, is believed to have been the oldest city in the world, dating back to beyond 5000 B.C. W.O.P. 413.

'The shafts they were digging went deeper, and suddenly the character of the soil changed. Instead of the stratified pottery and rubbish, we were in perfectly clean clay, uniform throughout, the texture of which showed that it had been laid there by the water. The workmen declared that we had come to the bottom of everything. I sent them back to deepen the hole. The clean clay continued without change until it had attained a thickness of a little over eight feet. Then, as suddenly as it had begun, it stopped and we were once more in layers of rubbish full of stone implements and pottery.

'The great bed of clay marked, if it did not cause, a break in the continuity of history. Above it we had the pure Sumerian civilization slowly developing on its own lines: below it there was a mixed culture.

'No ordinary rising of the rivers would leave behind it anything approaching the bulk of this clay bank: eight feet of clay imply a very great depth of water, and the flood which caused it must have been of a magnitude unparalleled in local history. That it was so is further proved by the fact that the clay bank marks a definite break in the continuity of local culture: a whole civilization which existed before it is lacking above it, and seems to have been submerged by the waters.

'There could be no doubt that the flood was the Flood of Sumerian history and legend, the Flood on which is based the Story of Noah.'

THE TOWER OF BABEL (Gen. 11¹⁻⁹ J)

The low plains of southern Babylonia are to this day dotted with ruined towers, several of which have been identified at various times with the Tower of Babel. The Biblical description of the building of such towers has been verified by archaeology. They were built of 'brick', which was 'burnt thoroughly'. There are no quarries in the district, so 'they had brick for stone', perforce, and 'slime', that is bitumen,

'they had for mortar'. They were composed of solid¹ platforms of brick, rising in terraces, and ascended by an inclined ramp or stairs to where a temple crowned the summit. Apart from their religious purpose, these ziggurats, as they were called, served as rallying-posts for the people, lest they be 'scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth', and doubtless often formed the nucleus of a 'city', to which a 'name' would be given, inscribed in cuneiform upon the tower.

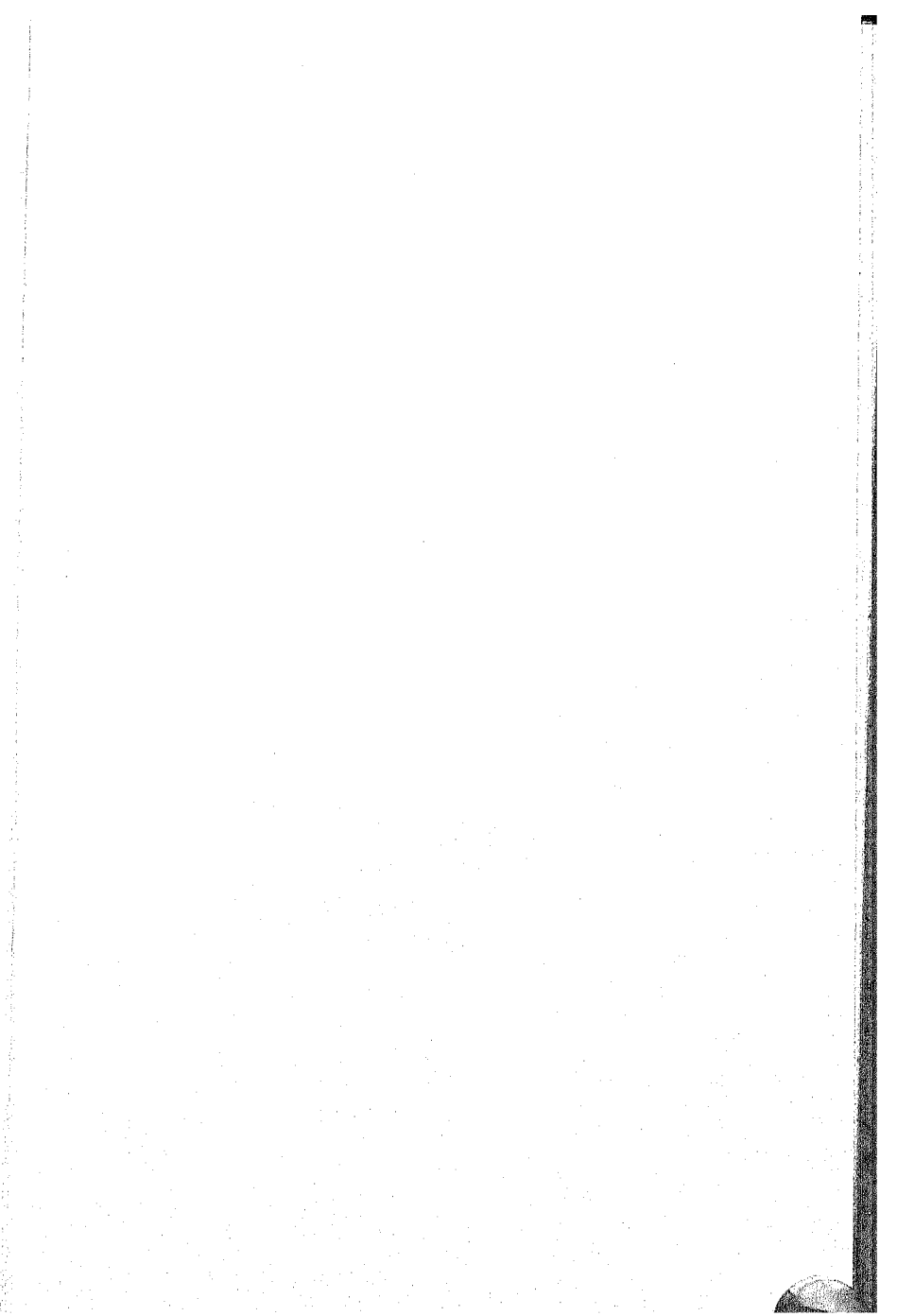
Many inscriptions recording the building or repair of such ziggurats have been unearthed. Hammurabi, for instance, tells us that he 'made the summit of the Temple Tower in Uruk high, and amassed provisions for Anu and Ishtar, as the protector of the land, who gathered again the scattered inhabitants of Isin'.

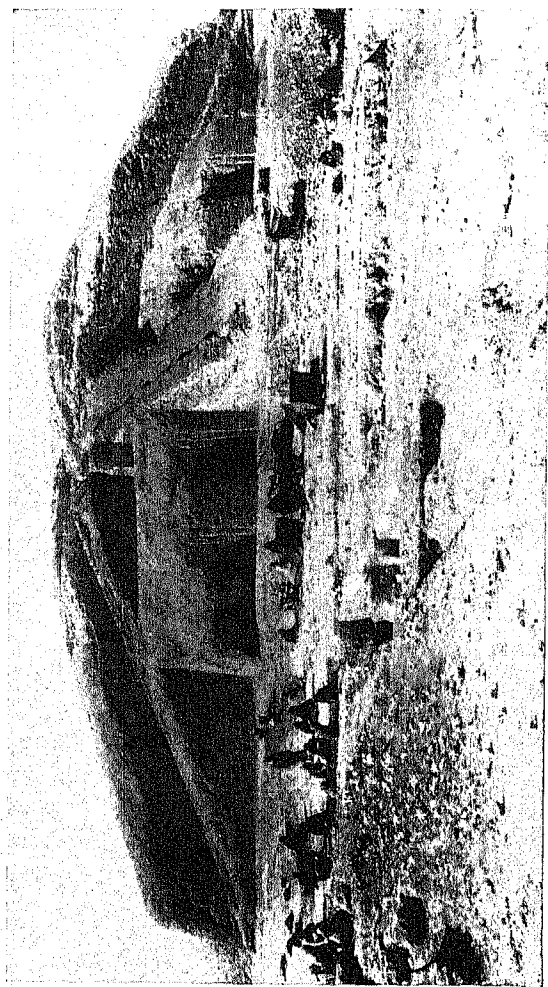
Up to the present century the striking ruins of the Birs Nimrud, still standing a mass of jagged masonry 150 feet above the plain, were frequently identified with the Tower of Babel, though it had rivals in the Akerkuf or Nimrod's Tower, and in the mound at Hillah which is still called Babel by the Arabs. To-day, however, it is generally agreed that the 'Tower of Babel' must have been within the walls of Babylon itself, and that its most probable site is the ruined temple or Etemenanki of Esagila, whose exact position is now certain.²

The Etemenanki is nothing much to look at to-day compared with the Akerkuf or Birs Nimrud. Little remains but the base of a great square tower surrounded by a ditch. But

¹ Unlike the pyramids, they concealed no hidden tombs or treasure-chambers, though often there were small built-in cavities containing foundation-records.

² B. T. A. Evetts, *New Light on the Bible* (1892), has a good account of early Babylonian exploration; also H. V. Hilprecht, *Exploration in Bible Lands* (1903). See also W.O.P. 897 (by H. R. Hall).





7. A TYPICAL 'TOWER OF BABEL'
Recently excavated *ziggurat* of Ur of the Chaldees, built of solid brick, and originally surrounded by a lofty temple.

it was once, we need not doubt, a noble edifice whose top almost reached to heaven. It was so high, apparently, that its pinnacle was in fact constantly toppling, and there are many records of its repair. In several of these we find the ominous words 'Its top shall reach the heavens'. Nebuchadrezzar, for instance, writes: 'I raised the summit of the Tower of stages at Etemenanki so that its top rivalled the heavens.'

George Smith¹ also quotes a remarkable fragment relating to the collapse of such a ziggurat: 'The building of this temple offended the gods. In a night they threw down what had been built. They scattered them abroad, and made strange their speech. The progress they impeded'—a passage which is certainly reminiscent of the Bible story.

¹ G. Smith, *Chaldaean Account of Genesis* (1880).

PART II

THE PRE-HISTORY OF THE HEBREWS

III

ABRAHAM

(Gen. 11²⁷-25¹¹)

THE Biblical tradition of Abraham's early connexion with 'Ur of the Chaldees', whether integral in the oldest document or not,¹ is strongly supported by archaeological research.

The implications of the influence of Babylonian legend upon the earliest Hebrew traditions have already been mentioned.

We have also the evidence of the Biblical names which so often, as it were inadvertently, embody very primitive tradition.² Thus the name Abraham,³ also in the form Abram, has been identified on Babylonian contract tablets as that of a small farmer under the First Dynasty (c. 2200 B.C.). Among the witnesses to such contracts appear the names Jacob (*Yakubu-ilu*) and Joseph (*Yasup-ilu*); and it is said that Israel (as a personal name) has been found on a Babylonian seal of 2500 B.C. Other names connected with the story of Abraham, such as Terah, Sarah, Milcah, Laban, and so forth,⁴

¹ Gen. 11²⁸ is from J, but with *in Ur of the Chaldees* a possible insertion by P. Other references to Ur are mostly P. 'Ur of the Chaldees' (Heb. *Ur-Kasdim*) as Abraham's original home is supported by the tradition (Gen. 10²², 11¹⁰ P) which makes him a descendant of Arpachshad, which may be a variant of *Ur-pa-Khasd-im*.

² For the evidence of Hebrew nomenclature in general consult F. Hommel, *Ancient Hebrew Tradition* (1897).

³ Abiramu, Ab-ramu = The Father is great.

⁴ Terah as a divine name appears in the Ras Shamra tablets, and a god Laban is found in the Cappadocian inscriptions.

have a Babylonian rather than a distinctively Hebrew flavour, and it is to be noted that few of them reappear in later Judaism.

Further, the name Hebrew actually first emerges as a tribal name about the beginning of the second millennium, being found among the records of the Elamite king Rim-Sin (c. 2100). Even so early the Hebrews seem to have been recognized as a separate people, with a reputation for fighting;¹ and already the name of their chief deity was El or Elohim (plural), as among the Biblical Hebrews. The name 'Hebrew' is spelt very much as it was six centuries later in the Tell el Amarna tablets, viz. Habiru, and 'the identification of Habiru with Hebrew is so distinctly called for both by the likeness of the words and by the part which the Habiru play in western Asia at this time, that it may be accepted with little uneasiness for the present purpose, which is to show that a people among whom *Abram the Hebrew* (Gen. 14¹³) was a chieftain first became known to the subjects of Rim-Sin and Hammurabi'.²

More significant still is the apparently undesigned coincidence of the Biblical chronology: one line of tradition fixing the date of Abraham by numerical 'dead-reckoning' as about 2100 B.C.³, another line carrying him back to the period of Hammurabi (Amraphel) who lived about the same time. Whatever the documentary origin of these two time-notes, they converge upon the same date for Abraham.

THE BATTLE OF THE KINGS (Gen. 14)

It will be remembered that according to the fourteenth chapter of Genesis (the literary date and origin of which is

¹ The name Hebrew was prefixed by a sign meaning Warrior.

² C. J. Gadd, *History and Monuments of Ur* (1929).

³ This figure is calculated from data given in Genesis (chiefly P), where Abraham's migration from Haran is put as 1,125 years before Solomon's Temple (967 B.C.), i.e. 2092 B.C.

uncertain) Abraham after his arrival in Canaan joins forces with five Amorite kings in their struggle to repel an invasion by four kings of the East. These four kings are named Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim (Gen. 14⁹).

Amraphel king of Shinar is clearly a Hebrew rendering of Hammurabi king of Sumer. Shinar, whether verbally identical with Sumer or not, is the usual designation of southern Babylonia. Some difficulty has been felt in the omission of the initial H from Amraphel, but that it was occasionally omitted by the cuneiform writers is shown by the spelling Ammurabi in some tablets. Further variants are Hammurapi and Ammurapi. As Hammurabi was deified, like most Babylonian monarchs, after his death, his name may have appeared as Ammurapi-ilu or Ammurapil, which brings us as near Amraphel as we could expect—Biblical Hebrew provides us with far stranger transliterations from the cuneiform.

Chedorlaomer king of Elam has not been identified as yet upon any contemporary inscriptions, although Scheil claimed at one time to have found his name in a tablet of Hammurabi. In form it is genuinely Elamite: *Kudur* (Chedor) appears in many royal compounds, such as Kudur-Nanhundi and Kudur-Mabug, while *Lagamar* (Laomer) was a well-known Elamite deity.

Pinches did indeed identify the name (in the form *Kudur-lahgu-mal*) in some late Babylonian war-songs of the Persian period, the so-called Spartoli Tablets, where, more remarkable still, it appears in company with Tidal (*Tudhala*), Arioch (*Eri-Aku*), and even, by a conjectural restoration, with Amraphel (*Hammurabi*) himself. Although these songs may have been copied from ancient and authoritative documents, little weight can be laid upon them: they may even have been based

upon the Biblical narrative. On the other hand, some scholars would regard the songs as depicting a situation under the obscure Kassite Dynasty of about 1700 B.C., when it seems a second Hammurabi ruled in Babylon.

Positive evidence for the existence of a Chedorlaomer king of Elam is thus lacking. But neither is there negative evidence against the possibility of such a king ruling over Elam somewhere about the beginning of the second millennium. The list of Elamite kings of this period being incomplete, there seems to be a gap after Kudur-Mabug II (2160 B.C.) into which he could be fitted.

Arioch king of Ellasar is less puzzling, though his identification, too, is uncertain. Ellasar is generally recognized as the well-known Elamite city Larsa, while under the form *Arioch* it is not difficult to recognize Eri-Aku, an equally well-known king of Larsa, who reigned from about 2167 B.C., and whose name might be expressed in Semitic form as *Warad-Sin*. Eri-Aku, however, is proved by the recently discovered 'Larsa Date List' to have died some years before Hammurabi came to the throne, so that there may be a confusion between Warad-Sin (*Eri-Aku*) and his brother Rim-Sin,¹ well known as a contemporary of Hammurabi.

Tidal king of Goiim is also unknown from the inscriptions, save for the reference in the war-songs above mentioned, where *Tudhala* certainly looks like the Hebrew *Tidhal* ('Tidal'). Goiim² may with much probability be identified with the Hittites of the north who at this period were beginning to intervene in Mesopotamia.

So much for the names of the Four Kings.

¹ Some scholars, however, would identify Warad-Sin and Rim-Sin. The whole period is very obscure.

² i.e. the Nations (Hebrew).

With regard to the general situation there seems no reason to question a factual basis of Genesis 14. An invasion of Canaan by Mesopotamia was at one time deemed incredible at this early period. The excavations have proved the contrary. It is now known that from the days of Lugal-Zaggisi of Erech (c. 2900 B.C.) and Sargon of Akkad (c. 2800 B.C.) the 'Land of Amurru', that is, of the Amorites, had been subject to such raids. Shortly before Hammurabi, Kudur-Mabug of Larsa calls himself 'Lord of Amurru', and Hammurabi himself claimed that his empire extended as far as the Mediterranean. There is plenty of independent evidence, therefore, for the subjection of the Amorite kings to Elam (*twelve years they served Chedorlaomer*, Gen. 14⁴), for the rebellion, and for the probability of a punitive invasion, should they have rebelled.

There is also good evidence for the Biblical ascription of leadership to the king of Elam, as implied in the phrase *came Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him* (Gen. 14⁵). For many years before, and for six years after the accession of Hammurabi (2123),¹ the kings of Elam were overlords of all the cities of Babylonia, including Babylon itself. Hammurabi's predecessor Sin-Muballit and Hammurabi himself may well have been compulsory allies of Elam in an expedition like this, such a combination being not without precedent.² All of which disposes of the objection that Babylon could not possibly have joined forces with Elam, as stated in the Biblical narrative.

In 2117 B.C., however, Hammurabi rebelled against Rim-Sin of Elam. A bitter war broke out between the two

¹ The precise dates of Hammurabi, &c., are fixed by the inscriptions in conjunction with astronomical research.

² *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. i, cc. 13, 14. The tablets record an alliance of Elam and Babylon some forty years earlier in 2165 B.C.

countries which ended with the total overthrow of the Elamite supremacy in 2093 B.C., and the beginning of the 'Golden Age of Hammurabi'. If we are to attempt a precise date for the events of Genesis 14, it may therefore fall between 2123 and 2117 B.C.

To sum up, although it cannot be claimed that archaeology has established the strict historicity of the Battle of the Kings, it has none the less failed to prove the opposite. This at least is fairly clear: the intention of the Biblical writer was to make Abraham a contemporary of the famous Hammurabi of Babylon (2123-2081 B.C.).

Details of the reign of this far-off sovereign, which had been buried in oblivion for three thousand years, are now revealed to us by numberless tablets and inscriptions recently deciphered. His best-known monument is, of course, the stele¹ of black marble discovered at Susa in 1900, inscribed with his laws, known as the Code of Hammurabi (p. 87). We shall have more to say of this later, and will merely pause to note the interesting fact that several of the episodes of Abraham's life, such as his dealings with Sarah and Hagar and his contract for the purchase of Machpelah, imply a current legal system very similar to that of Hammurabi's Code.

Leaving details for a broader view, the Biblical story of Abraham and his migration does fit in with what we know of the general situation at the beginning of the second millennium. Babylonia had already been for some centuries a centre of Semitic peoples in constant communication with their kinsmen in the west. The route from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran, Damascus,² and Palestine was well known. Apart

¹ Stele (pronounced steel-ee)—a stone, upright slab containing an inscription.

² Some scholars conjecture that Abraham's Haran was not the famous

from the natural tendency of nomads to seek 'fresh woods and pastures new', Elamite pressure from the east had long tended to promote a westward flow along the grasslands of the 'Fertile Crescent',¹ and once arrived in northern Syria a similar pressure on the part of the growing Hittite power would divert the Semitic tide towards Palestine and the south. It may well be that the Biblical story of Abraham's journeyings preserves a dim memory of these prehistoric tribal movements.

In conclusion, we cannot do better than quote one of the latest pronouncements of scholarship:² 'The result of these considerations is to suggest that: 1. The tradition of Abram's birth at Ur may be fearlessly accepted. 2. His sojourn there may have been under the reign of Rim-Sin or Hammurabi, about 2000 B.C. 3. His traditional journeying from Ur to Haran does in fact broadly correspond with a general northern transfer of the Habiru or Hebrew peoples from southern Babylonia, where they are first mentioned in secular literature.' From which it will be gathered that in some respects the latest scholarship is more 'conservative' than that of the previous generation.

UR OF THE CHALDEES

The site of Ur under the modern village of Muckayyar, now an important railway junction, has been definitely identified by the discovery of the foundation-cylinders, each in its little chamber, built within the four corners of the ziggurat—

city in Mesopotamia, but a less-known place near Damascus in the lesser 'Mesopotamia' (*Aram-Naharaim*) between Abanah and Pharpar.

¹ The 'Fertile Crescent' is the crescent- or horse-shoe-shaped belt of fertile riverine country from southern Babylonia, up the Euphrates, then bending south along the Orontes and Jordan valleys to the Delta of the Nile.

² C. J. Gadd, *History and Monuments of Ur* (1929).

incidentally the first discovery of its kind. Here we read the name of the city, and that of Ur-Dungi the Sumerian founder of the temple in 2500 B.C. Nearby, at Tell el Obeid, an inscription on marble takes us back as far as the first king of the first Sumerian Dynasty, c. 4000 B.C. So that the civilization of Ur was already of immemorial antiquity before Abraham was born.

The discoveries of Woolley in 1928 and onwards have filled in many details of the culture of Ur. The private houses of Abraham's day reveal an astounding amount of refinement, 'the whole plan of the building anticipating almost exactly that of the richer houses of modern Baghdad'. Beautifully wrought articles of gold and silver, of a date at least 2,000 years older than Tutankhamen, show more delicate artistic work than anything so early in Egypt. A chased filigree gold dagger is particularly exquisite. Here, too, at a time nearly 2,000 years before the so-called Iron Age, wrought iron has been found—though still as a precious metal used chiefly for ornaments. Near by, too, has been found the oldest piece of glass in the world—made five thousand years ago!

It is unlikely, however, that Abraham and his people were themselves city-dwellers: the pastoral ideal is too strongly marked in the earliest Hebrew tradition. Yet without doubt he must have been familiar with the city-dwellers whose culture as described above reveals such high development. Still more likely is it that he was keenly aware of the religious atmosphere of Ur.

From time immemorial Ur had been the centre of Moon-worship, her temple the shrine of Sin or Nannar. The excavations have shown that the Moon was called *Abu*, Father. He was described as 'The Source which of itself begets itself, and for ever continues' . . . reminding us almost of the phrase

I am that I am. He was also named 'The Shepherd', and there is reason to believe that already the divine name *Yau* or *Ya* (root of the name JAHWEH, or Jehovah) was bestowed upon him. His chief festival was the spring New Moon in the month Nisan, like the Jewish Passover. Second only in importance to the temple at Ur was the temple of the Moon at Haran, whither Abraham went after leaving his native city.

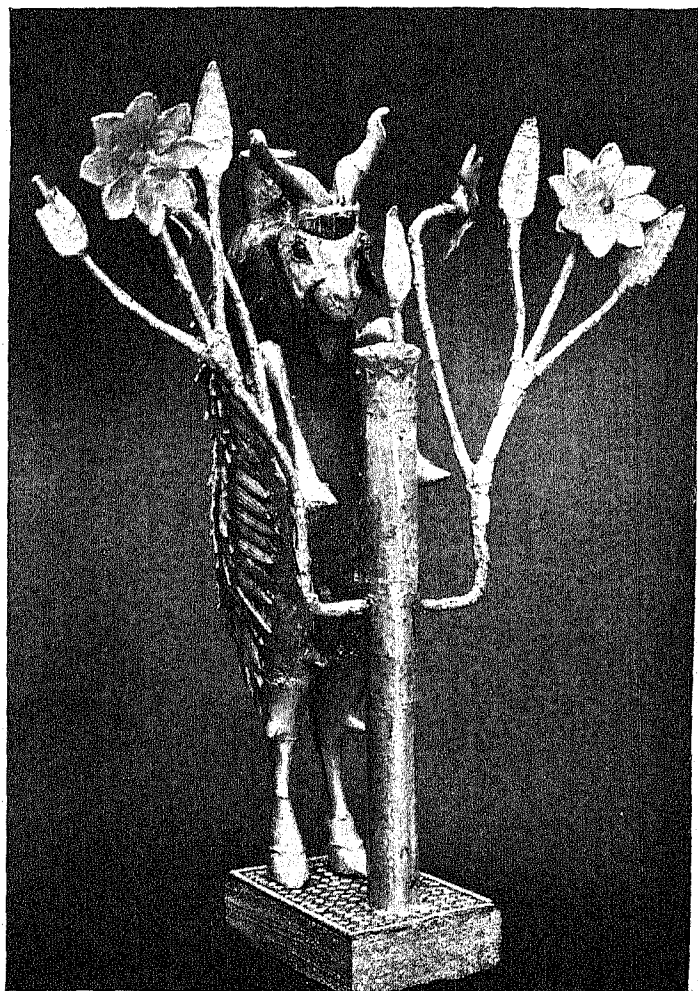
That there was a dark side to this Moon-worship is only too clear. Human sacrifice was prevalent, especially in connexion with the funerals of royalty. In one such grave was found a group of ten women arranged in two rows and still wearing their court regalia. Many corpses were also found entombed within the house-walls.

Mention may here be made of the curious '**Ram-in-a-Thicket**' Statuette of gold, lapis lazuli, and shell discovered at Ur. It represents a ram caught in a thicket, to the branches of which its legs are tied with silver chains—evidently a religious *motif*, for it is one oft repeated in similar statuettes. A possible connexion between this figure and the Biblical story of Abraham's proffered sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22 E) has been suggested.

As Irwin¹ finely sums up: 'Such were the people among whom Abraham had been brought up, and such were some of their beliefs. Amid their polytheism he heard the voice of the one true God. Starting with their ideas of human sacrifice, he learned through that same voice the lesson that put an end to human sacrifice as a normal practice in the religion of the Hebrews.'

In view of the facts outlined above, it has been conjectured that Abraham's reasons for migrating from Ur were primarily religious. Up to the accession of Hammurabi, Moon-worship

¹ C. H. Irwin, *The Bible, the Scholar, and the Spade* (1932).



8. RAM-IN-A-THICKET STATUETTE

A small figure in gold, lapis lazuli, and shell, representing a common *motif* in Babylonian art at the time of Abraham.

had remained without a rival amongst the Semites of Babylonia. But Hammurabi himself favoured the new cult of the Sun, or Shamash. It is Shamash who inspires his Code of Laws, and Shamash-Iluni is the name he gives his son.

Now Abraham may have been attached rather to the worship of Sin, the Moon. In addition to the coincidences noted above, it is pointed out that Sarai may signify Sharratu, Moon-Princess; Milcah may be Malkatu, Queen of the Sky; Terah sounds like a form of Yerah, a lunar title; Laban like lebana, poetical for the moon; and of course Sinai may be the Mountain of Sin. On this theory Abraham's departure from Ur was a protest, already doggedly monotheistic, against admitting any strange god in his temple. 'In Abram we see a Mahdi. The march out from Babylonia appears to us a hegira. The religious movement under Mohammed offers in many points an historical analogy. Like the religion of Mohammed, so that of Abram is a reforming advance upon the current ideals' (Jeremias).

ABRAHAM IN CANAAN

Archaeology has found no traces of Abraham in Canaan, which, in the nature of the case, was only to be expected. But many of the places mentioned in the Biblical narrative have been identified and shown to have existed as early as the patriarchal period.¹

Shechem (Gen. 12^b J) has been excavated by Sellin and others near Nablus. It is clear that the site was occupied from the earliest times, though not fortified till 2000 B.C. Garstang discovered the name of the city (*Sekmem*) in 1901, on an inscription of Senusert III, one of the oldest accounts of

¹ For Palestinian excavations see J. G. Duncan, *Digging up Biblical History* (1931); J. Garstang, *Joshua-Judges*, appendix (1931).

Egyptian campaigning in the country.¹ Similarly at Bethel and Ai (Gen. 12⁸ J) traces of Bronze Age² occupation have been found. Gerar (Gen. 20¹ E) had an occupation dated by Petrie at 2600 B.C. Excavations show that it became a great grain-growing centre about 2000 B.C., the time of Abraham—perhaps as a result of the warning given by the famine mentioned in Gen. 12¹⁰ J, which caused the patriarch to seek sustenance in Egypt. Sodom and Gomorrah have not been identified with certainty, but Mallon believes he has found the former city in a plain of the Jordan valley, where there are remains of a great Amorite city utterly destroyed by fire about 2000 B.C.

As to Salem (Gen. 14) this is probably the same as Jerusalem, the *Uru-Salim* of the Tell el Amarna tablets. Its existence as an occupied site can be traced back to the early Bronze Age, and its Jebusite fortifications on the southern mount of Ophel to about 2400 B.C., though there was nothing very elaborate in the way of defences until a little later than 2000 B.C. It is an interesting question, what is the earliest date at which Jerusalem appears on the monuments? The honour seems to go to some ostraka found in 1925, at Luxor, invoking a curse upon certain enemies of Egypt, among which appears the name of a Canaanite city *Wrwshlm*, quite possibly our Jerusalem. The ostraka are dated in Dynasty XI, about 2500 B.C. As to the derivation of the name, the conjecture that Salem³ was an ancient Semitic god of peace is said to have been verified by the recently discovered Ras Shamra tablets, so that Jerusalem = Uru-Salem = The City of the God of Peace.

¹ See below, the Stele of Sebek-khu, p. 59.

² The various Ages are usually thus dated for Canaan: Neolithic, 4000-2500; Bronze, 2500-1200; Iron, 1200 onwards.

³ The name has been found in a feminine form (*Shalmanitu*) in the Babylonian inscriptions.

ABRAHAM IN EGYPT

Who was the Pharaoh who *entreated Abram well*, when the patriarch visited Egypt in search of corn? (Gen. 12¹⁰⁻²⁰ J).

Unfortunately the dates of Egyptian history at this early period are still in doubt by a very wide margin, but it is known that from the third millennium onwards the country had been subject to incursions of 'Asiatics' from Palestine, Syria, Sinai, or Arabia. A barricade, the so-called 'Prince's Wall', had even been erected to keep them out. 'It is not impossible that the story of Abram is an echo in Hebrew tradition of such an Asiatic invasion of Egypt.'¹

Recent scholarship, however, tends to follow Manetho in dating the peak and culmination of this alien invasion considerably earlier than Abraham, and to conjecture that on his visit to Egypt early in the second millennium he may have found the celebrated Hyksos Dynasty already firmly established in the Delta.²

The Hyksos, or 'Shepherd Kings' (as Manetho calls them), were alien invaders who had poured into Egypt from Syria at a date probably earlier than 2000 B.C., driven the native Pharaohs far up the Nile to Thebes (Karnak), and established themselves in Avaris (Tanis, Zoan)³ as their capital, until their expulsion from Egypt in 1580 B.C. Many traces of their passage through Palestine *en route* for Egypt have been found, as, for example, in unmistakably Hyksos-type fortifications at Hazor, Shechem, Debir, Lachish, Gaza, Jericho, and in the Hyksos graves at Bethpelet (c. 2300 B.C.). Unfortunately they

¹ E. T. Peet, *Egypt in the Old Testament*, 37-56.

² Flinders Petrie insists that the XVth (Hyksos) Dynasty began about 2370 B.C. See his 'Revision of History' in *Ancient Egypt* (1931). But others, e.g. A. S. Yahuda (1934), demand a much later date—c. 1780.

³ So Gardiner. Others locate Avaris at Pelusium.

were of low culture, and have left very few records of their presence, but among the names of their rulers several appear to be distinctly Semitic, such as Salatis (the same root as Sultan), and the remarkable Jacob-Her—although the last may be no more than the Egyptian 'God watches over'.¹

There are other names, however, which have a non-Semitic sound, and the belief is growing that the Hyksos conquerors, though doubtless largely Semitic, were rather 'a congeries of nations, mingled Syrians, Bedouins, and Aryans which burst the weak barrier of the "Princes' Wall" and overwhelmed Egypt by means of their bronze scimitars, horses, and war-chariots' (*Cambridge Ancient History*). Their generic name perhaps supports this view, Hyksos being now generally accepted as *Hyk-Shashu* (Bedouin chiefs).² The possession of horses, a characteristically Hittite arm, and the fact that Hyksos and Hittite pottery in Palestine is indistinguishable³ have led many scholars to conjecture that the Hyksos, who had probably been driven southwards by Hittite expansion on the north, included a Hittite element within their ranks.

Numerous relics of the Hyksos Dynasties (the XVth and XVIth) have been found not only in northern (usually called Lower Egypt) but also in Palestine, as indicated above, showing that they were, if not in possession of, at any rate in constant communication with the Amorite kingdoms of Abraham's day. In this connexion we should not overlook the

¹ 'There is no Hyksos name Jacob-El or Jacob-Her. Ya'qb-hr simply means, The God HR watches over.' (Albright, *J.P.O.S.* xii. 256.)

² Not *Hyk-Sos*, King-Shepherds, as Manetho thought. See J. W. Jack, *Date of Exodus* (1925).

³ Duncan, *op. cit.* He definitely identifies Hyksos with Hittite: "There is no doubt that the Hyksos of Egypt are the same people as the Hittites, or a people closely allied to them." (*Accuracy of the Old Testament*, p. 37.)

curious phrase in Numbers 13²², *Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan (i.e. Avaris) in Egypt*, where we may perhaps see a dim recollection of this Hyksos-Amorite intercourse.

Such was the probable situation in Egypt when Abraham journeyed thither in search of sustenance about 2000 B.C. A Semite, he would find a ready welcome from his fellow Semites among the Hyksos. Indeed, as we have already hinted, there are some who would detect in the Biblical story of Abraham's descent into Egypt a dim memory of the Hyksos invasion itself. This, however, neglects the essential fact that Abraham entered Egypt not as an invader but as the guest of powerful friends.

The difficulty of definitely dating the events of early Egyptian history,¹ already mentioned, makes it impossible to indicate the precise relevance of many archaeological discoveries, but two very interesting relics of this remote era may here be quoted.

On Khnumhotep's Tomb at Beni Hassan of the reign of Senusert II (between 3000 and 1900 B.C.) is a sculpture representing a visit of Semites to the Egyptian official, apparently bringing the products of their country in barter for the corn of Egypt. The train consists of thirty-seven Syrians, men, women, and children under the leadership of their chieftain Ab-sha or Abi-shua.² 'All are pure Semites. Their thick black hair falls to the neck, the beard is pointed but without moustache. Their garments, kilts or long cloaks, are close-fitted and fringed with elaborate decoration. Spears, clubs, and bows are their weapons. An ass carries a pannier and a lyre of Asiatic form.'³

¹ The 'Long Date' as opposed to the 'Short Date' school of chronology, each respectably supported, differ sometimes by over a thousand years.

² According to Hommel, a distinctively Hebrew name (cf. I Chron. 8⁴).

³ A. T. Olmstead, *History of Palestine and Syria* (1931).

The idea was once widely entertained that this picture actually illustrated the arrival of Joseph's brethren in Egypt to buy corn: it might equally well be connected with Abraham's visit to Egypt. But without stressing the precise identification, the fact certainly remains that in this picture from the (then) unchanging East we have a pretty accurate impression of the appearance of Abraham and the patriarchs; as well as a piece of evidence in general support of their intercourse with Egypt as related in the Bible.

Another interesting relic is the famous **Romance of Sinuhe**, written on a papyrus found in 1895 by Quibell in a tomb at the Ramesseum, of about the same date as the above (XIIth Dynasty), which gives us a glimpse of Syria as seen at this time through Egyptian eyes.

Sinuhe, or Sinuhit, the hero of this ancient 'novel', travels from Egypt over the isthmus of Suez to Palestine. After staying awhile in Qodem ('eastward') near the Dead Sea, he proceeds to northern Canaan, where he marries the daughter of the king, and receives a grant of land. It was a fertile spot, where figs and grapes grew plentifully, so that there was 'more wine than water'. It was rich in honey, oil, and all kinds of fruit, as well as grain. There were plenty of cattle, and 'milk in every form'. Being appointed general of the army against the Bedouins, he slew them in large numbers, plundering their herds. Eventually 'there came a mighty man from Palestine who mocked me in my tent, a man who had no equal, and had vanquished all rivals. But I was not dismayed. In the night I strung my bow, I prepared my arrows, I whetted my dagger, I polished my sword. When the day broke, my adversary appeared. Every one was horrified at the sight, and distressed on my account. They said, Is there no other warrior who would fight against him? But

I remained steadfast, and shot him so that my arrow stuck in his neck. He shouted and fell upon his nose, and I slew him with his own lance. For this I became great and rich.'

So much for the glimpse which Sinuhe gives us of the land 'flowing with milk and honey'—and with blood—as it looked some four thousand years ago.

MELCHIZEDEK KING OF SALEM (Gen. 14)

Archaeology has little light to throw upon the strange incident of Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek, beyond suggesting that Salem was in fact the Jerusalem of later history.

Allusion is often made, however, to the tradition that Melchizedek was *without father, without mother, without genealogy* (Heb. 7³), with which is compared the assertion made by the King of Jerusalem (Arad-Hiba) in the Tell el Amarna letters of 1380 B.C.: 'Behold this land of Jerusalem, neither my father nor my mother gave it me—the hand of the mighty king gave it me.'

It is difficult to see what this has to do with Melchizedek. The fourteenth-century King of Jerusalem never implies that he had no father or mother, but merely that he owes his throne not to any royal ancestry but to the favour of the Pharaoh. 'Behold,' he writes in another place, 'neither my father nor my mother appointed me in this place. The mighty hand of the King introduced me into my father's house. Why should I rebel against the King?'

We cannot conclude our long chapter on Abraham better than in the words of Jeremias: 'We have shown how the milieu of the stories of the patriarchs agrees in every detail with the circumstances of ancient Oriental civilization of the period in question, as borne witness to by the monuments.

The actual existence of Abraham is not historically proved by them. It must, however, be allowed that the tradition is ancient: it cannot possibly be a poem with a purpose of later time. Wellhausen worked out a theory that the stories of the patriarchs are historically impossible. It is now known that they are possible. If Abraham lived at all, it could only have been in surroundings and under conditions such as the Bible describes.'

IV

CANAAN IN THE PATRIARCHAL AGE

ARCHAEOLOGY has little to add to the Biblical narrative regarding the personalities of the patriarchs, but it certainly helps us to visualize more clearly the background against which they moved.

In the first place excavation has proved the extraordinary fact that in the patriarchal period Canaan as a whole had not yet emerged entirely from the Stone or Neolithic Age. There were still, side by side with the bronze-using Amorites, debased aborigines who employed weapons of flint, wood, or bone, and lived in caves. 'The earliest limit of the cave-dwelling period is usually spoken of as 3000 B.C. It is much more likely that it extends back as far as 10000 to 12000 B.C., if not earlier: and traces of the cave-dweller civilization are found as late as 2000-1200 B.C.'¹

The caves, which have been found in large numbers through the length and breadth of Palestine, were partly natural, partly artificially adapted, for the cave-man was evidently a patient and skilful miner, piercing long tunnels in the solid rock, digging a staircase to some deep water-hole, or linking up cave with cave until a perfect labyrinth of underground tenements was made.

In stature, judging by his low lintels and narrow passages, he was slim and short: in appearance, if we are to trust the Amorite caricatures of him executed on jug-handles, far from prepossessing, with an exceedingly thick neck, huge cauliflower ears, bridgeless nose, and jutting under-jaw. A few of

¹ J. G. Duncan, *Digging up Biblical History* (1931), vol. i, has a good description of these cave-dwellers.

the cave-man's own graffiti or wall-drawings have been found, showing him engaged in the chase, or (more remarkably) in agricultural pursuits. Of his religion little is known. He seems to have worshipped some underground deity to whom libations of blood were poured through channels cut in the rock. The presence of many bones of pigs indicates that he was particularly addicted to swine's flesh, and may explain the later Jewish horror of it. The cave-man apparently cremated his dead.

His caves continued to be used at times long after the last cave-man had vanished. They were adapted as water-cisterns by cutting a hole in the roof, and making them water-tight with plaster. 'When we read of Isaac digging a well near Gerar (Gen. 26²⁵ J), this undoubtedly refers to the excavation of a cistern in the soft rock for collecting rainwater.' Such wells were valuable, a prize to be fought for (Gen. 26²⁰ J), or as a last resort choked up with rubbish. Many of these wells have been found so filled.

Terrible were the purposes to which these empty cisterns were sometimes put. Recent excavation has discovered several full of human bones. Such, no doubt, was the pit into which Joseph was cast (Gen. 37²⁴ E), and the dungeon where *there was no water, but mire* into which they *let down Jeremiah with cords* (Jer. 38⁶). They were also used as traps, as store-chambers, as secret hiding-places, as tombs. To such *dens in the mountains and caves* fled the Israelites from their foes (Jud. 6² J), the five Kings at Makkedah (Josh. 10¹⁶ J), David at Adullam (I Sam. 22¹), and so on. Many large caves have been discovered quite capable of accommodating the parties of fifty prophets who fled to them from the fury of Jezebel (I K. 18⁴).

Earlier, probably, even than the cave-men was a palaeo-

lithic¹ race who left behind them the colossal dolmens, menhirs, and other megalithic monuments still visible, especially on the east of Jordan. Great slabs of stone, some of them weighing as much as nineteen tons, were somehow or other dragged from enormous distances and heaped one upon the other. Sometimes an incredibly massive slab is raised at one end upon a smaller one, sometimes there are sloping rows of such slabs, sometimes a pair of upright slabs is surmounted with a huge stone lintel in the manner of Stonehenge. These monuments are not isolated but grouped, again as at Stonehenge, in circles or ovals, one of which is 250 feet in diameter, 5 feet high, and 40 feet thick. Others are arranged in long parallel avenues, oriented east and west, with the entrance towards the rising sun. These megalithic monuments show progressive development, the latest type being a rectangular structure of several chambers built of huge stones, and roofed with yet greater slabs resting on a false vault.

No wonder that new-comers in Canaan, arriving long after the extinction of these remarkable builders, looked on their gigantic monuments with awe, and spoke of the '*giants*' *that were in the earth in those days* (Gen. 6⁴ J, R.V. marg.). Who but giants could have done such mighty works?

THE AMORITES

The principal inhabitants of Canaan, however, at the time of the patriarchs and until the Conquest, were the Amorites.² Of these archaeology has much to tell.

They were of Semitic blood, akin to the Hebrews but of

¹ The oldest human remains yet found in Palestine (by Miss Garrod in 1934) were at Mount Carmel, where they are dated 75000 B.C. They were rather smaller men than ourselves (*Daily Telegraph*, Feb. 5, 1934).

² The term probably included the Canaanites (i.e. 'traders') and subsidiary tribes, such as Hivites, Jebusites, &c.

older stock, having migrated northwards from Arabia, motherland¹ of all the Semitic peoples, about the beginning of the third millennium, so settling in Palestine nearly a thousand years before the days of Abraham. From about 3000 B.C. onwards they gave their name to the country, which is frequently described on the earliest cuneiform inscriptions as the 'Land of Amurru'. They have left no inscriptions of any length themselves, but judging by their nomenclature and by the Amorite glosses² in the Tell el Amarna letters, they spoke a Semitic language probably not incomprehensible to the Hebrews. Many pictures of them appear on the monuments, showing a refined and handsome type of face, with high receding forehead, aquiline nose, and neatly trimmed beard.

Although spoken of with contempt by the Biblical historians, the Amorites had clearly attained no little degree of culture. In contrast with the nomadic Israelites, long before patriarchal days they had become characteristically city-dwellers and settled agriculturists. Their cities were both numerous, well built, and strongly fortified . . . *fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; beside the unvalled towns a great many* (Deut. 3⁵). Excavation at many Amorite sites has revealed well-planned houses, with drainage, water-conduits, granaries, and store-chambers, as well as beautifully executed ornaments in gold, silver, and bronze. The presence of Egyptian, Babylonian, and even Mycenaean pottery shows maritime enterprise and world-wide commerce. They were obviously wealthy and powerful, and have been called 'the aristocrats of the ancient world'.

¹ In the Aurignacian and Upper Mousterian periods Arabia was a far more fertile and better watered locality than it is to-day (J. A. Montgomery, *Arabia and the Bible* (1934)).

² Glosses = explanatory insertions, as it were 'in brackets'.

That they were well advanced in the science of warfare is evinced not only by the fact that they were able to win and to hold the country for so many centuries, but by the ruins of their fortifications which recent excavation has laid bare. Built mostly of brick reared upon some commanding hill-side, each fortress was, not isolated, but one of a strategic chain guarding the land from invasion by Aramaean and Hittite on the north, by Babylon and the Bedouins on the east, and perhaps at first by Egypt on the south. Such forts have been located and in many cases excavated at Gerar, Bethpelet, Megiddo, Taanach, Bethshean, Hebron, Lachish, Shechem, and elsewhere.

CANAANITE RELIGION

Highly important to the Biblical student is a study of the religious atmosphere which the Hebrews encountered in Canaan, for there can be little doubt that it had a great influence on the development of early Judaism. Excavation has shown that culturally there was little distinction between the Canaanite and the Hebrew, and that the latter on his arrival in Palestine naturally adopted much that he found in use. Thus the modern archaeologist, examining the many remains of pottery, tools, weapons, and the like surviving from pre-monarchical Palestine, finds himself unable as a rule to distinguish Hebrew from Amorite workmanship. How far the religion of the Hebrews was influenced by local usage it is beyond our present scope to discuss,¹ but we cannot omit a rapid survey of Canaanite religious remains.²

Most remarkable in this connexion were Macalister's ex-

¹ See Oesterley and Robinson, *Hebrew Religion* (1930); and A. W. F. Blunt, *Israel's Social and Religious Development* (1924).

² For a brief but close-knit survey see S. A. Cook, *Religion of Ancient Palestine in the Light of Archaeology* (1908).

cavations at Gezer,¹ on which most of the following observations are based. Here a typical Canaanite 'High Place', almost complete in all its details, was disclosed. There was a line of monoliths (standing stones) 75 feet long on a stone platform 8 feet wide, the monoliths being 5 to 10 feet high. These were evidently the 'pillars' so often mentioned in the Bible, such as the pillar which Jacob anointed with oil at Bethel (Gen. 28¹⁸ JE), or that which was accepted as a normal adjunct of worship even as late as Hezekiah (Is. 19¹⁹). 'The Hebrews adopted the symbolism of the Canaanite religion, though their own religion was different' (Duncan). Some of these pillars at Gezer have cup-shaped hollows scooped on their tops for libations, and some are worn by the kisses of devotees. A Phoenician plinth portrays a person kneeling in adoration before a similar *massebah* (pillar), proving that they were objects of worship. These pillars are of local limestone undressed in accordance with the regulations of the Law, *Thou shalt not build it of hewn stone* (Ex. 20²⁵ E); and are set up on a platform without steps, as it is written, *Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar* (Ex. 20²⁶ E).

It is suggested that such sacred pillars evolved from original sacred trees, of which they were a conventionalized form through an intermediate sacred wooden pole, and that they subsequently developed in two distinct ways: (1) as sacred effigies, (2) as altars. Examples of the first may perhaps be seen in the Egyptian pillar surmounted by a head of Hathor, and in the votive tablets found at Serabit in Sinai depicting the same. In the case of the altar-evolution it would seem that the cup-hollows on the tops developed into horns, the 'horns of the altar'.

¹ R. A. S. Macalister, *Excavation of Gezer* (1912), 3 vols., and *A Century of Excavation in Palestine* (1926).



9. TYPICAL 'HIGH PLACE' AT GEZER

Showing the sacred *masseboth* (pillars) running north and south. One of these pillars was a trophy of war (an 'Ariel') taken from some captured shrine. Date about 1200 B.C.

Such sacred poles or pillars were probably what was meant by the *asherah* of Scripture. Their use was associated particularly with the worship of the goddess Asherah, whose name has been found on a cuneiform tablet in Palestine as well as in the Ras Shamra tablets, and who was clearly one of the ancient Canaanite deities—the 'rude nature goddess' of whom many reliefs have been found.

Near to the platform of pillars above described was a level rock surface covered with over eighty curious cup-hollows, some of them connected with channels leading to a subterranean cave, artificially made and clearly intended for libations or some such sacrificial purpose. At a little distance, on a rising mound, were the remains of a temple, where the bones of sheep and goats were found near the probable site of the altar. The complete precincts, in short, of a Canaanite High Place were laid bare,¹ giving us a fine idea of what such a sacred spot must have looked like in early patriarchal days, though without the sacred trees which probably surrounded it, whispering their divine oracles to the gathered priests (II Sam. 5²⁴).

The picture is darkened, however, by distinct traces of human sacrifice. One of the pits at Gezer contains the bones of fourteen men, two women, one child, and an infant, mingled with the bones of sheep and goats. Another pit contains sure evidence that such were the relics of no natural death, namely, the skeleton of a young girl *sawn in half*, two decapitated skeletons, and the upper half of the skeleton of a boy. 'Traces of the practice of human sacrifice, in fact, though rare, seem to be undeniable', and we are reminded of the cases reported in the Bible, such as Mesha's sacrifice

¹ Still more clearly seen at Petra, though in that place of much later date.

of his son upon the wall (II K. 3²⁷), or Jephthah's offering of his daughter (Jud. 11).

One type of such monstrous sacrifice was especially prevalent, the so-called 'foundation sacrifice'. Sometimes the foundation pillars of a building are found embedded in an adult skeleton, but more frequently is found under the floor an earthenware jar containing the bones of an infant. Usually the victim seems to have been dead before interment, but traces of a still more inhuman rite have been found—of a *living* child entombed within a hollow cavity under the foundations, its skeleton still contorted in the agony of suffocation. The notion was, of course, that the life and vigour of the victim would enter into the edifice. Mention of such sacrifice is made in the Bible, as when Hiel rebuilt Jericho *with the loss of Abiram his first-born* (I K. 16³⁴).

Such human sacrifice, however, seems to have given place very soon to the 'substitution sacrifice', where, in place of a human being, an animal (like the ram of Abraham) was offered, or even a merely symbolic victim. Under many foundations has been found an earthenware lamp within the jar that in earlier times would have contained a human skeleton. The light of the lamp had evidently sufficed to symbolize the light of life.

Very interesting is an earthenware altar of incense discovered at Taanach, described by Macalister as 'undoubtedly the most important cult-object which Palestine has as yet yielded'. It is a yard high, hollow, with walls 2 inches thick. A fire was built inside it, and on the top was placed a bowl of incense. It is horned like many late-type altars, and is decorated with a relief depicting lions and human-headed winged animals or cherubs. There is also a picture of a man holding a snake. This altar came from a private house, and is dated as late as the reign of Hezekiah.

The mention of a snake reminds one of the Brazen Serpent which Hezekiah abolished from the Temple (II K. 18⁴). Many such serpents have been found, an actual brazen one at Gezer, some of them standing on their tails like the snake in the Adam and Eve seals of Babylonia. It is believed that some of the pits were used as houses for live snakes.

Still more interesting are the carved human-shaped idols which may be the *teraphim* of which we so often read (e.g. Gen. 31³⁰ JE, or I Sam. 19¹³, &c.). The *teraphim* were probably household gods similar to the images and figures found in such numbers all over Canaan. Some are fully modelled statuettes of Astarte; others are in relief upon small plaques like the Russian ikons. Many of them are most artistically designed and modelled, adorned with elaborate head-dress and jewellery.

To sum up very briefly, the excavations show with an unexpected wealth of detail the circumstances of what we may call prehistoric Palestine. The Canaanite discoveries in particular help us to realize the truth of the Biblical picture of a Chosen People struggling against the overwhelming pressure of a deeply rooted and pervasive idolatry, the best of them fired by a nobler vision, but many of them succumbing at times to the influences around them. 'The discoveries amply attest the fact reiterated in the Old Testament, that the greatest obstacle to Hebrew progress was their fatal gift of imitation, and the greatest hindrance to the advance of their own religion was the presence of the Canaanite in their midst' (Duncan).

THE SOJOURN IN EGYPT

ARCHAEOLOGY has little additional light to throw on the Biblical narrative of the 'affliction' in Egypt.¹ Yet 'with regard to the main fact that at some time or other certain of the people who subsequently came to be known as the Hebrews dwelt in Egypt for a period, and afterwards entered or re-entered Canaan, there is hardly a dissentient voice. The fact that the Egyptian records contain no reference to the Sojourn does not in the least affect the problem, for in the first place our Egyptian records are far from complete: in the second, the Sojourn may well have been on so small a scale that the Egyptians never thought it worth recording: and in the third place, the Delta, which was the scene of the events, is still almost a closed book to us in early times.'²

The Bible gives us very little help in fixing the dates of this Egyptian period. Many Pharaohs, for instance, are mentioned, but none of them actually named: nor is reference made to any outside datable event. The time-notes given in our text are mostly late insertions (D or P), and though there is a tendency in modern scholarship to pay them more attention than formerly, they can bear little weight as historical evidence.

With regard to the Sojourn, the oldest documents state that it lasted *four hundred years*³ (Gen. 15¹³ J), and that it

¹ C. A. F. Knight, *Nile and Jordan* (1921), very thoroughly covers the whole Egyptian field of Biblical history, and contains the fullest possible references. E. T. Peet, *Egypt and the Old Testament* (1922) supplies a corrective to Knight's exhaustive but somewhat uncritical treatment of the material.

² E. T. Peet, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

³ A late gloss is more precise, i.e. '430 years' (Ex. 12⁴⁰), thus making Jacob's descent into Egypt 1877 B.C. exactly.

ended with the Exodus *in the four hundred and eightieth year* before the foundation of Solomon's Temple¹ (I K. 6¹). The latter date is scientifically fixed as 967 B.C., so that we get the following table of Biblical dates:

Abraham leaves Haran	2092 B.C.
Jacob goes to Egypt	1847 B.C.
The Exodus from Egypt	1447 B.C.

The first of these dates we found little reason to discredit. How far does archaeology confirm the others?

Now a date in the nineteenth century B.C. brings us, as we have already explained,² once more into contact with the Hyksos kings, the most likely hosts, as of Abraham, so of Joseph and Jacob.³ 'On every ground this seems the best, if not the only period, to which we can assign the entry of Israel into Egypt, for the hostility to the Asiatics roused by the Hyksos dominion was so great that it is almost inconceivable that any king of the XVIIIth Dynasty (the Dynasty which succeeded the Hyksos) should have welcomed a Semitic tribe for any reason whatever.'⁴

A medieval tradition of unknown origin repeated by George the Syncellos⁵ names Joseph's Pharaoh as Apapus. Modern research has discovered this Apapus (Aa-kenen-Ra Apepi III) among the Pharaohs of the XVIth (Hyksos) Dynasty. Thus a fresh mite of confirmation is added to our conjecture.

¹ Even this '480 years' is suspected by many scholars as an editorial insertion.

² See above, p. 41.

³ Yahuda, however, puts the descent into Egypt much earlier than the Hyksos. 'Every touch in the Joseph story emphasizes the alien character of the Hebrews to the Egyptians, which can only be understood under a purely Egyptian ruler' (*Accuracy of the Bible*, 1934).

⁴ T. H. Robinson, *History of Israel*, vol. i (1932).

⁵ i.e. the steward of a Byzantine monastery.

If Apepi III were really the Pharaoh in question, two recently discovered relics of this monarch have a certain interest. The first, a bronze silver-handled dagger, found at Sakkara in 1898, bearing his cartouche,¹ which it is conceivable that Joseph may have handled and admired. The second, a somewhat humorous note in the Sallier Papyri,² in which Apepi complains that a noisy hippopotamus under his window is disturbing his sleep. One is tempted to suggest that here we may have the reason for his uneasy dreams (Gen. 41)!

No figure of Biblical history has been more frequently the target of guesswork, ingenious and otherwise, than that of Joseph. Many writers on Biblical archaeology seem quite unable to resist the temptation to 'identify' him on the monuments, or to trace the details of his picturesque life-story to their 'source'. In the opinion of most authorities, however, Joseph the man, like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, has left us no archaeological relic of his existence. Like all the great Jews even up to David and Solomon, and most of the great Jews to the end of Biblical history,³ he hit what we may call the 'blind spot' in the vision of contemporary historians and remained unnoticed in the records. The solitary germ of truth in the guesses and parallels noted below is this, that the story of his life, being almost certainly written down in its present form many centuries later than the events described, may have been embellished or modified in minor details by the reminiscences of a later age.

Thus, in speaking of Joseph, reference is usually made to the *Tale of the Two Brothers* (p. 113), the Osarsiph Legend

¹ Cartouche: the equivalent of the royal signature in enclosed hieroglyphics.

² Sallier Pap. I, Brugsch, i. 238.

³ This applies even to Christ.

(p. 72), Yankhamu and Dudu of the Tell el Amarna tablets (pp. 103, 104), and Arisu (p. 114), which we shall notice briefly in their chronological order.

Very interesting in this connexion is the memorial Stele of Sebek-khu, discovered by Garstang at Abydos in 1901, and described by Peet¹ as 'one of the most important historical documents ever found in Egypt'. Self-dated in the reign of Senusert III (Breasted, 1887-1849 B.C.), it is the earliest record we have of an Egyptian campaign in Palestine, describing how the Pharaoh overthrew the Bedouins (Mentiu) of Sinai, penetrated the 'vile land of Southern Palestine' (Retenu), and did battle with the Canaanites (Aamu) before the walls of Sekmem—a city usually identified² with the Biblical Shechem.

The personality of Sebek-khu himself, however, is what has been most seized upon by a certain type of Biblical archaeologist. Thus, Toffteen boldly identifies him with the Biblical Joseph on the following grounds:

1. Sebek-khu was born in 1917 B.C., like Joseph.
2. 'After a period of obscurity, he won promotion at the Egyptian Court in 1887 B.C.'
3. His 'beautiful name' was ZAA, the beginning (obviously) of Zaphenath-Paneah (Gen. 41⁴⁵).
4. His wife's name was IS-NT, i.e. Asenath.
5. His father's name was JCB, i.e. Jacob.
6. He captured Shechem, as did Joseph (Gen. 48²², R.V. margin, where we must understand that Joseph was given a 'portion in Shechem').³

¹ E. T. Peet, *The Stela of Sebek-khu* (1914).

² e.g. by Meyer and Max Müller. Peet, however, regards this identification as 'purely arbitrary', see *Egypt and the Old Testament*, pp. 39, 62.

³ O. A. Toffteen, *The Historic Exodus* (1909).

All this looks impressive on the face of it, but on further scrutiny we discover that the *facts* are:

1. By Breasted's reckoning, Sebek-khu was born in 1911 B.C.; Joseph, by the Biblical dating, in 1916. Still, the coincidence in dates is striking.
2. The stele says nothing of 'obscurity' (still less of a foreign origin or slavery) save that of youth. Sebek-khu was promoted by Sesostri III at the age of twenty-three.
3. 'The name Zaa (*Dj*) means "the bald", and has nothing to do with the name Zaphenath-Paneah.'
4. Neither Sebek-khu's wife nor the name IS-NT appears on the stele at all.
5. His father does not appear on the stele, either: but his mother's name is given as Ita. Toffteen has taken Ita (*It*) as the name of his father, has misread it I p k, has conjectured it ought to be I K P, and so arrives at JCB for Jacob.
6. Sekmem on the stele may or may not be Shechem, and the R.V. marginal reading of Gen. 48²² may or may not be correct.

Thus, like so many of these 'brilliant conjectures', the Sebek-khu identification collapses at the first touch of exact scholarship.¹

The genuine Egyptian atmosphere of the Joseph story is admitted by all, and has been examined in great detail by many writers.²

The selling of Joseph in slavery to Potiphar is paralleled

¹ For the comments on this stele I am indebted mainly to Prof. A. M. Blackman (privately).

² e.g. Knight, *op. cit.*, and most elaborately in A. S. Yahuda, *Language of the Pentateuch in its Relation to Egyptian* (1934); *Accuracy of the Bible* (1933), &c.

by many records of Kan'amu (Canaanite) slaves. The names Potiphar, Zaphenath-Paneah, Asenath, and so on, are of genuine Egyptian formation, though their precise meaning is still in doubt. Ankle-length examples of the 'coat of many colours'¹ are found in pictures of Semitic visitors to Egypt. The magicians of the story are frequently mentioned on the monuments—on the Rosetta Stone, for instance. The signet-ring, the vesture of fine linen, the gold chain about Joseph's neck are all in accordance with custom. When reading of the privilege accorded to Joseph of riding in Pharaoh's second chariot, we are reminded of the fact that chariots and horses were introduced into Egypt by the Hyksos. The office of *merper* or major-domo to the Pharaoh, held by Joseph, is often honourably mentioned on the inscriptions. And so on.

Doubt was once cast on the possibility of a mere Canaanite slave's promotion to high honours in Egypt, but archaeology has discovered many striking parallels. Thus Meri-Ra, a Canaanite, became armour-bearer to the Pharaoh; Ben-Mat-Ana, also a Canaanite, was raised to the important office of interpreter; Yankhamu, a Semite, actually became deputy to Amenhotep III, with charge over the granaries of the Delta, and there are many other examples.

References to disastrous famines and to the feeding of hungry suppliants there are many. The Ameni Inscription written for Ameni, an official of Usertesen I (c. 1980 B.C.), on his tomb at Beni Hassan, runs as follows:

Then came years of famine. Then I ploughed all the acres of the province. I nourished the Pharaoh's subjects. I looked after their food, so that there was none hungry among them.

¹ 'Coat of many colours' is really a mistranslation of the Hebrew *Chetoneth passim* = 'a long garment with sleeves' (R.V. marg.) Gen. 37³. But 'many-coloured' was a true description of such garments, nevertheless.

Another, even more to the point, if we believe that Apepi III was the Pharaoh of Joseph, is the **Bebi Inscription** at El Kab, written on the tomb of Bebi, an official of that monarch:

I collected corn as a friend of the harvest god. I was watchful at the time of sowing. And now, when a famine arose lasting many years, I distributed corn to the city each year of famine.

Of this inscription Kittel writes: 'We do not hesitate to admit that the coincidence of the time of this famine with the conjectural date of Joseph, together with the extraordinary infrequency of great famines in Egypt, seems to us to be of real weight in favour of the identification of the two famines, and consequently in support of the history of Joseph generally.'¹

Readers of the Joseph story are frequently confused to find that in it Egypt is sometimes called the 'Land of Rameses' (e.g. Gen. 47¹¹ P), seeing that the name Rameses was unknown to fame² until the XIXth Dynasty (c. 1300 B.C.) many centuries after the date we have claimed for Joseph. This, however, proves nothing save the lateness of the 'gloss': it is as though we said, with a natural inadvertence, 'Caesar landed in England', instead of 'in Britain'. In the course of the centuries the names of even the best-known places and countries have continually changed, and are sometimes of little help in identifying the locality intended. Thus the precise sites of most of the Egyptian places named in the Bible are still in question.

¹ R. Kittel, *History of the Hebrews*, i. 190 (1899).

² Ahmosis, however, had a son named Rameses, c. 1600 B.C.; see *P.B.A.S.* 1890, 157 (Bunsen).

The 'Land of Goshen', however, is generally located¹ in the modern Wady Tumulat, that is, in the well-watered district between the lower reaches of the Nile and the modern Suez Canal. Farther than this we cannot go. Brugsch thought he had identified the site of a city of Goshen under the present village of Saft-el-Henneh, where a hieroglyphic inscription seemed to read GSM or Gesem. But Gardiner, a reliable authority on Egyptian, denies the accuracy of the transliteration, which he says should be ShSM, so that archaeological evidence for the usual location of the Hebrew 'reservation' is still lacking.

The inscriptions supply many parallels for the invitation extended to the Israelites to settle in Goshen. Thus a monument of Harmhab (1400 B.C.) records, as we shall see,² how a community of shepherds from Asia³ begged the Pharaoh to grant them pasturage 'as was the custom of the father of their fathers from the beginning'. In contrast with the deserts of Asia, Egypt must have seemed a most desirable spot. On the tomb of Tehuti-hetep at El-Bersheh there is a picture of Syrian cattle imported into Egypt, in which the promise is made: 'Once ye trod the Syrian sands: now here in Egypt ye shall feed in green pastures.'

THE OPPRESSION IN EGYPT

In the course of time Joseph died, and was embalmed in the Egyptian manner, but his people continued for many years to enjoy the hospitality of the Pharaohs. Eventually, however, *there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not*

¹ It certainly was so by the translators of the LXX.

² See below, p. 106.

³ *Asia* and *Asiatic* are Egyptian generic terms including Syrians, Phoenicians, Hebrews, Canaanites, &c.

Joseph (Ex. 1⁸ J), and everything was changed for the worse: the long years of the Oppression begin.

Who was this new Pharaoh? Here again the Bible gives neither name nor date, yet strangely enough it is just at this point that archaeologically speaking the dates begin to be fairly certain. It is generally agreed that the Biblical phrase quoted above implies a complete change of dynasty and of political circumstance. If it was the Hyksos who welcomed the Israelites, it must almost certainly have been the expulsion of the Hyksos which caused their oppression.

The Hyksos were expelled from Egypt at last by the Pharaoh Ahmosis (Aahmes, Amasis¹) in 1580 B.C. They fled northwards to Canaan, where legend (repeated by Josephus) attributes to them the foundation of Jerusalem, and after a last stand at Sharuhén disappear from history. In Egypt all traces of their hated occupation were as far as possible obliterated, and, one may well surmise, their erstwhile friends the Hebrews were henceforward grievously afflicted.

The new XVIIIth Dynasty immediately began to build up the temples and other edifices ruined by the Hyksos. In these building-operations the inscriptions record the employment of many *Fenkhú* (Phoenicians, Asiatics), among whom may have been the Israelites, who, as the Bible tells us, *built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses* (Ex. 1¹¹ J).

A storm of controversy has raged around these two names. At one time it was claimed that both sites had been identified as cities founded by Rameses the Great (1292-1225 B.C.), and that therefore the Oppression must have taken place chiefly

¹ These Egyptian names have a great variety of spelling, according as they are taken from the Greek historians, or transliterated direct from the hieroglyphs. Even in the latter case, it must be remembered that in Egyptian the vowels have to be inserted by conjecture.

under the XIXth Dynasty, and not, as we now believe, under the XVIIIth Dynasty.¹

Thus Pithom was located at Tell el Mashkuta, and thoroughly excavated by Naville² in 1883. He believed he had found actual 'store-chambers' for grain in some curious deep cellars of strong masonry without doors or windows. The identification was supported by hieroglyphic inscriptions referring to Pi-tum, House of the god Tum, but it is now seriously questioned. The so-called store-chambers were really fortress emplacements. Amongst the quantities of pottery there was 'no type of vessel which could be described as Hebrew' (Duncan). Though there were traces of Rameses II, the city had clearly been founded centuries earlier. 'The kind of reasoning by which the discoverer of Pithom sought to show that the place was a store-city is typical of the way in which the facts of archaeology are twisted and distorted in the service, so-called, of Biblical study.'³ As to the name Pi-tum, it might be used of any temple where Tum was worshipped.

Similarly Raamses was located by Flinders Petrie at Tell el Retabeh. Here also were inscriptions referring to Tum, and to Rameses II. 'The identification with the Biblical Raamses, however, is uncorroborated by any inscriptional testimony whatsoever' (Gardiner), and in any case the city so discovered was not founded by Rameses, but had been in existence since the remote VIth Dynasty. Yet a curious piece of evidence was found by Fisher⁴ of Pennsylvania at Bethshean in 1923, namely, an inscription referring to the trans-

¹ The reader should here refer to the Tables in the Appendix.

² E. Naville, *The Store-city of Pithom* (1885).

³ E. T. Peet, *Egypt and the Old Testament* (1922).

⁴ *Pennsylvania Museum Journal*, 1923, p. 234.

portation of a number of the inhabitants for the building or repair of a city of Rameses in the Delta. Gardiner, however, at one time preferred to identify the Biblical Raamses, not with Tell el Retabeh, but with Pi-Ramessu (Avaris), the Delta capital of the XIXth Dynasty near Pelusium, 'an identification which makes the narrative much more understandable' (Peet).

But even if 'Pithom and Raamses' were located and discovered to have been founded by Rameses the Great, it would scarcely suffice to establish an historical argument, for modern critics of the text suspect the names as late insertions in the Biblical narrative.

Assuming, then, that the Oppression began with the expulsion of the Hyksos in 1580, and continued for many generations, there were many 'Pharaohs of the Oppression', the first three being Ahmosis (1580-1557),¹ Amenhotep I (1557-1539), and Thothmes I (Thuth-mosis) (1539-1501). The last initiated the policy of imperial expansion so characteristic of the XVIIIth Dynasty, leading his victorious forces along the old North Road through the maritime plain of Palestine as far as Kadesh on the Orontes and far-flung Carchemish of the Hittites, where the newly formed kingdom of the Mitanni put a check to his progress.

More interesting, however, than his warlike exploits is the picture which the monuments give us of his favourite daughter Hatshepsut, for if our theory of the chronology is correct, she may well have been the Princess who found Moses 'in the bulrushes' (Ex. 2^{5t}. E). The tradition in Josephus that the name of this Princess was Thermuthis seems to connect her with the House of Thothmes, and the

¹ The Egyptian dates are henceforth fairly certain: we follow J. H. Breasted, *History of Egypt* (1906).

impression of her character gained from the Bible is not unlike that of Hatshepsut. In naming the baby as she did, she conferred upon him a name common in her family—as in the compound Thoth-mesu, mesu (or moses) being the Egyptian for son.¹

Makere-Hatshepsut, on the death of her father, became *de facto* Queen of Egypt during the early years of the reign of her brother Thothmes III. From the first she announced her intention of reigning as a man, and many representations of her are in male attire. Known as the 'Divine Consort', her reign being marked by great prosperity, she erected many temples and obelisks, some of which survive to this day, such as the giant obelisk (100 feet) at Karnak. The shrine she built in memory of her father is said to be 'the most lovely creation in stone which the Nile can show'.

One of her most famous expeditions was a visit to Punt in Arabia, whence she brought back a quantity of myrrh, ebony, ivory, and gold for her temples, as well as monkeys, leopards, and slaves. Very amusing to modern eyes is the relief depicting the excessively corpulent wife of the king of Punt offering presents to Hatshepsut.

Unfortunately her strong-minded ways excited such jealousy in the heart of her overshadowed brother Thothmes III, that no sooner was she dead than he obliterated or destroyed nearly all her monuments. If the plaster with which he covered them had not fallen away, we should know even less of her than we do.

The story of how the Princess found Moses in the ark of papyrus ('bulrushes') among the flags of the river-side has many parallels in ancient lore. To the classical instances of

¹ Yahuda denies this derivation. Moses, he says, = *Mo-She* = Offspring of the Nile.

Romulus and Remus, Bacchus, and Perseus we may now add a cuneiform legend of the ninth century B.C. concerning Sargon I of Akkad:

My vestal mother conceived me, and I was born in secret. She laid me in a chest of reeds, closed my door with pitch, and laid me in the River. The River bore me down to Akki the water-bearer. Akki the water-bearer drawing water drew me out, and reared me as his child.

There is no need to postulate a common origin for such simple and natural romances, but if one must do so, the episode of Moses (sixteenth century B.C.) may have been the inspiration of them all.

THE 'PHARAOH OF THE OPPRESSION'

Possibly it was the death of Hatshepsut which inaugurated the last and worst phase of the oppression of Israel under her successor Thothmes III. The most important historical monument we have yet encountered is undoubtedly this Pharaoh's famous inscription on a pylon of the Temple at Karnak,¹ self-dated 1494 B.C. Here we find the earliest reference to Canaan in the Egyptian royal inscriptions. Describing the conquests of Thothmes in Syria and Palestine, the inscription gives a list of Canaanite princes 'whom His Majesty shut up in Megiddo', and mentions many places whose names are familiar to us from the Bible story, such as:

Kadesh, Megiddo, Dothan, Merom, Damascus, Hamath, Laish, Hazor, Chinneroth, Adamah, Taanach, Ibleam, Acco, Carmel, Beth-Shemesh, Joppa, Gath, Lydda, Socoh, Migdol, Gerar, Ekron, Adoraim, Gezer, Beeroth, Bethel, Gibeah.

The spelling of these names shows that already the towns of Palestine were known by the names which appear in the

¹ Thebes, Luxor, Karnak—W.O.P. 191.



10. THE PHARAOH OF THE OPPRESSION (?)

A fine portrait of Thothmes III in his youth. Our so-called 'Cleopatra's Needle' is one of his monuments. Date about 1500 B.C.

Biblical narrative of the Hebrew Conquest under Joshua. And the list of booty gives an indication of the great prosperity and wealth of the country in the sixteenth century:

2,041 mares, 1,949 oxen, 2,000 goats, 296 bulls, 20,500 sheep, 200 suits of armour, 892 chariots, 32 gold-plated chariots, 7 silver-plated tent-poles, 1,784 pounds of golden rings, 966 pounds of silver rings, ivory and ebony ornaments, a golden plough, cedar-wood tables inlaid with gold and precious stones, golden sceptres, embroidered robes, 208,000 bushels of corn.

Among the place-names recorded on the monument are two which have a special interest for us—Joseph-El, or -Er, and Jacob-Er. Modern scholarship, however, is uneasy at the suggestion that these names have anything to do with the Biblical Joseph or Jacob. As the transliteration seems to be in doubt in the first case (Yashup-el), and the interpretation questioned in the other (*Ya'qob-Er* may mean simply 'God watches over'), no historical argument can be based upon them. The same must be said of Sayce's identification of 'Jerusalem' on the inscription, in the form of *Har-Er*, the 'Mount of God'.

Supremely important for archaeological research is the reference in this record of Thothmes to the Hittites. Previous to the decipherment of this inscription nothing whatever was known of the Hittites (*Hatti*, 'Children of Heth') except what was related in the Bible: their very existence in fact was doubted. But since then one discovery after another has enabled us to reconstruct the history of this long-forgotten people of whom we shall have more to say later on.

This Karnak inscription signals the beginning of Egyptian rule over Syria and Palestine. Henceforward for several centuries Canaan is a province of the Egyptian empire. That the Pharaohs were masters of the country at the time of Joshua and the early Judges is a fact which would not have

been suspected by readers of the Biblical narrative alone, but it is one of the assured results of archaeology, testified again and again in the inscriptions and by the many marks of Egyptian occupation and influence discovered by recent excavation in Palestine.

Little must it have occurred to Thothmes, breaking down the ramparts of the Amorite and despoiling the riches of Canaan, that he was preparing the way for a far more enduring conquest of the country by the humble Hebrew slaves who were even then toiling under the lash of his task-masters by the Nile.

The inscriptions show that forced labour and painful building-operations were characteristic of the reign of Thothmes III. Wall-paintings in a tomb at Abd-el-Gurnah, for instance, portray the building of the Temple of Amen at Karnak, with the slave-gangs (apparently Semitic) hard at work. Over them stands the slave-driver, an inscription running: 'The task-master saith to his labourers, the rod is in my hand: be not idle.'

With regard to *bricks without straw*, the older commentaries used to tell us that 'even sun-burnt bricks, stamped with the cartouche of Thothmes III, have been discovered made without straw, whereas in ordinary circumstances straw was used'. The fact, however, seems to be that the practice of binding the clay with straw was anything but invariable. In any case, the Bible does not say that the Hebrews were expected to use bricks made without straw, but only that they were compelled to supply the straw themselves—*Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick . . . let them go and gather straw for themselves* (Ex. 5⁷ J). To this there exists an interesting illustration in an Egyptian papyrus, in which a building contractor complains: 'I am not provided with

anything. There are no men for making bricks, and there is no straw in the district.'

If our reckoning is correct, it is the death of Thothmes III, chief Pharaoh of the Oppression, which is recorded in that key-passage: *And it came to pass in the course of those many days, that the king of Egypt died* (Ex. 2²³ J).

Thothmes had indeed reigned 'many days'—fifty-three years to be exact (1501-1448). There is an uncanny interest in the fact that his mummified body survives to this day to give us some impression of the man he was. From a study of this mummy, Maspero remarks that he was a 'fellah of the old stock, squat, thickset, vulgar in character and expression, but not lacking in firmness and vigour'.¹ But Hall more kindly says that a statue of him in his younger days shows a youth possessed of a remarkably fine and intelligent face, with a Roman nose'.²

¹ Maspero, *Struggle of the Nations* (1896).

² H. R. Hall, *Ancient History of the Near East* (1913).

VI

THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT

ALTHOUGH up to the present we have found no actual archaeological evidence for the Biblical narrative, 'it is impossible to deny either the fact of the Exodus or the historicity of Moses. An event which stamped itself so deeply on the consciousness of the people as to control all its later thinking, to ratify its religion, and to dictate its theory of history, can by no possibility have been a mere invention.'¹ The main problem is, When did it all happen?

The Biblical story implies that Moses waited for the death of the great Oppressor (Thothmes III) before returning to Egypt from his refuge in Midian; and that the Exodus took place almost immediately in the reign of Thothmes' successor, that is, of Amenhotep II (1448-1420). Amenhotep, therefore, was probably the 'Pharaoh of the Exodus' who hardened his heart and 'would not let them go'. He followed Thothmes in 1448 B.C., which coincides with the Biblical time-note dating the Exodus as 480 years before the Temple, i.e. 1447 B.C.

With this identification of the Pharaoh of the Exodus agrees, for what it is worth, the Osarsiph Legend reported by Josephus (from Manetho²) to the following effect:

The Pharaoh Amenophis (Amenhotep) gathered all the lepers of Egypt together, and made them labour in quarries near the Red Sea, allowing them to make their centre at Avaris, the deserted capital of the Hyksos kings.

Here the colony of lepers chose a former priest of On (Heliopolis) named Osarsiph (Joseph) to be their leader. This Osarsiph

¹ T. H. Robinson, *History of Israel*, vol. i (1932).

² See Appendix, 'Note on Ancient Authorities'.

thereupon changed his name to Moses [1], and enacted a number of laws to preserve the religious integrity of his community.

Eventually he fortified Avaris, and in alliance with the refugee Hyksos now centred in Jerusalem, made war on Amenophis. Amenophis was defeated, and Osarsiph-Moses ruled over the whole land of Egypt for fourteen years.

Finally the Egyptians rose in revolt, expelling the lepers, who afterwards became the patriarchal ancestors of Israel.

Although there is obviously no historical value in this farrago of legend, we quote it as a good specimen of the kind of thing encountered immediately one seeks outside the Bible for any tradition of the Exodus. With regard to the present point, all we can claim is that possibly the tradition preserves a vague memory connecting the events of the Exodus with the name of Amenhotep.¹

In the contemporary records of Amenhotep II, one must admit that there is no reference whatever to such national disasters as the Ten Plagues, or the loss of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea, far less to the escape of the Hebrew colonists. But this was only to be expected: the Egyptians were the last people to record their misfortunes.

Nor is there any sign upon the mummy of Amenhotep II, discovered in 1898 in the Valley of the Kings, to show that he was drowned at sea. The Bible indeed never states that he was, or even that he personally accompanied *his horses, his chariots, and his horsemen* into the water (Ex. 14^{23f}).

The Tenth Plague—which *smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne* (Ex. 12²⁹ J)—ought, however, to be capable of archaeological verification. Is there any record on the monu-

¹ Surely 'Amenophis' must be intended for Amenhotep, and not for Merenptah, as was once asserted.

ments that the eldest son of Amenhotep II came to an untimely end?

That he did so certainly seems to be implied by the curious **Dream Inscription** of Thothmes IV, Amenhotep's immediate successor, showing that Thothmes was not that sovereign's eldest son.

On an immense slab of red granite near the Sphinx at Gizeh it is recorded that Thothmes IV, while yet a youth, had fallen asleep under the famous monument, and dreamed a dream. In this the Sphinx appeared to him, startling him with a prophecy that one day he would live to be King of Egypt, and bidding him clear the sand away from her feet in token of his gratitude: which, on his accession, he did.

It is clear from this inscription that Thothmes' hopes of succession had been remote, which proves—since the law of primogeniture obtained in Egypt at the time—that he could not have been Amenhotep's eldest son. In other words, there is room for the explanation that the heir apparent died in the manner related in the Bible.

As to the historical situation in general, there is no reason to doubt the possibility of the Exodus occurring about the beginning of the reign of Amenhotep II. The records show that on the death of the puissant Thothmes III the whole of the outlying parts of the empire broke into revolt. At the instigation of the Mitanni in the far north a rebellion against Egyptian supremacy involved the whole of Syria and Palestine. Amenhotep soon moved against the confederates and crushed them, but it may well be that the distractions of this campaign early in his reign created a diversion of which Moses was not slow to make use.

Thus, though we have no explicit proof of the Exodus story outside the Bible, 'there is', in the words of E. T. Peet, 'yet



11. THE SPHINX

The famous monument at Gizeh, recently cleared of desert sand, almost as it must have appeared to Moses. Between the paws and close to the breast is the Dream Stele of Thothmes IV recording how he too cleared it of sand over three thousand years ago.



nothing in the monumental evidence which throws doubt on the general credibility of the Biblical narrative. On the contrary, the picture presented by the latter agrees remarkably in general features as well as in detail with the picture presented by the monuments.'

THE WILDERNESS WANDERING

The duration of the Wilderness Period is fixed by one of the oldest written passages in the Bible as 'forty years'—*I led you forty years in the wilderness* (Amos 2¹⁰; cf. 5²⁵)—with which all other Biblical references agree. Forty may, of course, be no more than a round number, but to make the duration of the Wandering much more or much less than a generation would be to do violence to the firm tradition. We may therefore assign this interlude to the years 1447-1407 B.C. or thereabouts, commencing with the Exodus and ending at the latter date with the entry of Joshua into the Promised Land.

Archaeologically, in the nature of the case, one can expect little additional light upon the Biblical narrative of these forty years during which the Hebrews were in hiding from the long arm of Egypt. But we can at any rate reconstruct the imperial background against which they moved.

Amenhotep II survived the Exodus for twenty-seven years, being succeeded about 1420 B.C. by a younger son Thothmes IV, whose tomb was discovered by Carter in 1902. It was adorned with pictures of his warlike exploits, but of course makes no reference to the Hebrews then lurking in the wilderness. He was succeeded in 1411 by Amenhotep III, whose reign inaugurated one of the most brilliant epochs of Egyptian history. It was claimed that his empire extended from Nubia to Mesopotamia, and the great North Road through Palestine resounded to the tramp of his armies. Palestine itself was

held in subjection to the Pharaoh by a system of vassal kings or chieftains, mostly Amorites, whose embattled fortresses (though weakened by previous Egyptian assault and spoliation) were held in fief to guard the roads from Bedouins and bandits, or if need be to hold the frontiers against more dangerous enemies until Egyptian reinforcements should arrive.

That the Egyptian supremacy in Palestine involved more than merely military occupation is clear from the innumerable remains of a peaceful and domestic type discovered by the excavations. Scarabs of the XVIIIth Dynasty are plentiful everywhere, thus dating the discoveries.¹ Other typical relics include 'Horus Eyes' (charms to avert the Evil Eye), statuettes of Nilotic deities such as Isis, Osiris, and Hathor with her lotus-flower, draught-boards and men, models of sacred cats, apes, and hippopotami, dolls, jewellery, and so on. There are many signs, too, that the Egyptian religion was not without its influence on the cults of Canaan, and that in more ways than one this influence was reciprocal.

There is some reason indeed to believe that Canaanite influence may have penetrated to the Court of Egypt itself. Amenhotep's favourite wife, Queen Thi, appears to have been of Semitic blood, a fact which opens up the conjecture that her famous son Akhnaton's religious zeal may have been due to his kinship with the cousins of Abraham. It was this Queen Thi whose parents Yuua and Thuaa were buried in the dazzling tomb discovered, with all its treasures still intact, by T. Davies in 1905.

¹ Scarabs: typically Egyptian ornaments or charms made in the shape of the sacred beetle of Egypt, and often containing the name of the reigning Pharaoh. They are thus the ancient Egyptian equivalent of date-stamps.

Under Amenhotep, Egypt attained a peak of wealth and splendour never touched before. A whole chapter might be written on his treasure-stores, his works of art, his magnificent temples and palaces, his towering monuments (of which the so-called Colossi of Memnon are so well known in picture), and his munificent endowment of the sacred Apis bulls.

While this mighty monarch was at the height of his power, it was clearly useless for any invader of his frontiers to expect success. We can well understand that Moses and Joshua, biding their time in the wilderness, must have felt that the opportunity for claiming the Promised Land was not yet.

THE ROUTE OF THE WANDERING

During these forty years (c. 1447-1407 B.C.), therefore, we are to picture Moses building up his people into a nation in the security of the wilderness. The wandering itself probably would not last very long: he would make as directly as possible for the well-watered camping-grounds by Sinai and Kadesh, there to settle down and develop his resources in peace.¹

The precise route of his journey thither will probably never be agreed. None of the place-names mentioned in the Biblical narrative have been certainly identified,² and excavations in the Sinaitic peninsula have failed to find any trace of the Hebrews.

Petrie's excavations at Serabit-el-Khadem, it is true, have proved the existence of Semitic quarrymen and turquoise-miners in the peninsula at this time. Quite unlike the free-roving people of Moses, they were clearly prisoners or slaves, held down to their work under Egyptian overlookers. Yet they were allowed a certain amount of religious freedom, as

¹ The J narrative says nothing of detours, but makes the Israelites march direct from Egypt to Kadesh.

² Even the identification of the 'Red Sea' (Heb. the Sea of Reeds) is in doubt.

is shown by a temple dedicated to 'Hathor, Queen of the Turquoise', where the cult-objects are of distinctly Semitic type—altars of incense, sacred pillars, and the like. If our chronology is correct, this temple was actually in use at the time of the Exodus, and Marston¹ makes the interesting suggestion that it was used by Moses as a pretext for visiting the peninsula—*let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God* (Ex. 5³ J). Petrie here discovered, among the interesting inscriptions described in our first chapter, a group of characters which he read as MNSHEH² and which some have tried to identify with the name Moses.

It is unlikely, however, that the route of the Exodus ever descended south into the peninsula at all. The name 'Sinaitic', and the identification of the Jebel Musa (Mount of Moses) with Mount Sinai go no farther back than the third century of our era, while the 'dotted line' showing the 'journey of the Israelites' in most of our Scripture atlases has no real authority. As a matter of fact the peninsula was probably the last hiding-place which any one would choose who was anxious to escape from Egyptian pursuit. From the days of Senerkhet of the 1st Dynasty onwards, its mines of precious stones and metals had been treasured possessions of the Pharaohs: to this day the hills of 'Sinai' are strewn with the marks of Egyptian occupation. The whole country was known and charted; indeed 'a papyrus chart—the oldest map in the world—has been discovered which reveals how the Pharaoh marked out the route across the desert to the gold-mines in that region'.³ It is extremely unlikely, therefore, that the

¹ C. Marston, *New Knowledge about the Old Testament* (1933), p. 137.

² It is more likely to be *Manasseh*.

³ Knight, *Nile and Jordan*, p. 228 (1933 edit.).

Israelites would dally long in a land so overrun by their enemies.

A very reasonable conjecture would place the Holy Mount of Sinai, or Horeb,¹ not in the peninsula, but east of the Gulf of Akaba in the volcanic region of northern Arabia. There are many indications in the oldest Biblical tradition that Sinai was a volcano (e.g. Ex. 19¹⁸ E: *Mount Sinai was altogether on smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace*). Now there are no volcanoes in the peninsula, but in Arabia there are several. It has been observed that 'the extensive volcanic region of Awaridh contains an isolated volcano called *Tadra* which appears to satisfy the requirements of the Biblical record concerning Sinai. . . . A number of Arab traditions still associate it with the exploits of Moses.'² Others suggest a more northerly volcanic area near Petra. From the crater of such a volcano at the height of its activity the light could be seen for many hundreds of miles, and it has been suggested that this was the *pillar of fire by night* which guided Moses in a direct line from the crossing of the Red Sea to the Sacred Mount.

The Land of Midian, which according to the Biblical narrative was in close contact with Sinai, must accordingly be located east of the Gulf of Akaba in Arabia, and not (as in the Scripture atlases) west of it in the peninsula. This fits in well with the Biblical narrative, where Midian is clearly in the neighbourhood of Moab and Edom—compare the very ancient Song of Deborah, for instance (Jud. 5⁴⁻⁵): and is in

¹ Horeb and Sinai are probably only different names for the same mountain, Horeb perhaps being the more primitive (W. J. Phythian-Adams, *The Call of Israel*, 1934).

² Ibid.

accord with a statement in Ptolemy the Geographer, and with the Septuagint translators, which imply that Midian took its name from Maon¹ (Minaea) in Arabia.

The importance of thus localizing Sinai and Midian lies in the fact that it brings us back once more to Arabia, the original motherland of the Semitic peoples and now (as it seems) the home of the Mosaic Law. Recent scholarship tends to lay far more stress on Arabian archaeology than formerly, and it is much to be desired that the country of Mohammed, so long almost closed to European explorers, should be more thoroughly excavated. Among the discoveries already made are the remarkable **Minaean Inscriptions** of south Arabia, dated by many scholars as early as the fifteenth century,² in which are found many parallels to Hebrew religious beliefs and practices, going back perhaps to the days of Jethro, Moses' Midianite father-in-law. And connected (in all probability) with this Minaean civilization are the recently discovered Ras Shamra tablets which contain so many curious reminiscences of the Mosaic legislation.

We also make contact with Petra,³ that unique rock-hewn city of north Arabia immortalized by Burgon in the famous lines:

Match you this wonder save in Eastern clime,
A rose-red city half as old as time.

The existing temples and typically Canaanite High Places of Petra (called in the Bible *Sela*, the Rock, or *Joktheel*) are probably not older than Nabataean times, but the religious

¹ Maon-ites is translated by Midianites in LXX. For survey of evidence for this identification of Midian see Jeremias, *op. cit.*

² But others regard them as contemporary with the Sabaeen kingdom many centuries later. See Montgomery, *Arabia and the Bible* (1934).

³ A picturesque description of Petra with excellent photographs is in Hammerton's *Wonders of the Past* (1934), p. 83.

importance of the place may date much earlier. Conjecture would connect it with the home of the Kenites, perhaps the ancient shrine of Jethro himself, and the spot which Balaam had in mind when he sang *Strong is thy dwelling place, and thy nest is set in the rock* (Num. 24²¹).

Phythian-Adams definitely identifies Kadesh (Kadesh-Barnea), where the Hebrews encamped on the eve of the Conquest, with this Petra, rather than with Ain Kadeis in the Negeb. In that district, he points out, there is no stream of any note, while *Kadeis* means simply a 'paddle', and has nothing to do with Kadesh. The very remarkable rivulet, on the other hand, which runs out of the solid rock through the narrow defile at Petra, he regards as the original of the Massah-Meribah episode (Ex. 17²⁻⁷ JE). The stream is still called the 'Brook of Moses' by the Arabs, and an adjoining hill is pointed out as the mount where Aaron died.

Such, perhaps, were the surroundings—beetling cliffs, volcanic mountains, fertile oases at their feet where encampment could be made, a district occupied by kindred tribes of no mean civilization nor unenlightened religion—in which Moses sojourned with the Midianites and where he afterwards prepared his people for their entry into Canaan. Here, if Hommel and his school are right, Moses may have spoken that dialect of Arabic which, fused with Canaanite, became the Hebrew tongue; may have learnt the script which evolved into the Hebrew alphabet; and may have renewed the half-forgotten faith of his forefathers under the influence of the mother religion of Arabia.

VII

THE LAW OF MOSES

How much of the Pentateuchal legislation, history, and teaching which we call 'The Law' is really the work of Moses himself, and how much of it is a later development inspired by him, is one of the main problems of Pentateuchal criticism. But it has always been, and apparently must continue to be, almost entirely a literary problem, to be solved by the literary evidence. So far no discoveries of archaeology have materially affected the conclusions of the higher critics in this department.¹ Neither Moses nor any of his Ten Commandments have been found upon the monuments. All that archaeology can do is to illuminate the background of Hebrew legal and religious development, and to enrich our understanding of its significance.

THE INFLUENCE OF EGYPT

First among the influences which moulded the development of the Hebrews we shall naturally look to Egypt, where Moses and his people awaited so long the mighty hand and outstretched arm of their Deliverer.

Many massive books have been written on this fascinating subject;² all we can attempt here is a very rapid survey of it. Thus, the musical instruments mentioned in the Bible are all depicted on the Egyptian monuments. The Hebrew

¹ Books on this subject are innumerable, e.g. Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (1892). Driver, *Literature of the Old Testament* (1898); Oesterley and Robinson, *Literature of the Old Testament* (1934), and Erith's lucid synopsis in *Gore's Commentary* (1928).

² See especially Knight, and Yahuda, *op. cit.*

weights and measures are of Egyptian rather than Babylonian origin. Biblical ceremonial and ritual, at any rate in its later elaboration, show distinct affinities with Egypt. The tabernacle, for instance, is made of Egyptian shittim wood (instead of Palestinian cedar), and its details of gold, silver, colouring, priestly vesture, and so on, as well as the ritual use of oil, incense, &c., may all be derived from Egyptian origins. The practice of circumcision was also common in Egypt.

The sacred boat, made in the form of a chest containing sacred emblems, was a familiar feature of Egyptian ceremonial, being carried in procession on the shoulders of the priests, and has been regarded by many as the prototype of the Hebrew Ark of the Covenant. The golden cherubs which adorned its lid have been likened to the Egyptian winged figures, especially the figure of Maat, goddess of Truth, often seen within the Egyptian ark covering with her wings the sacred disk.¹ Many other coincidences have been pointed out: 'most remarkable of all, the High Priest of Memphis wore as his distinctive badge of office a breastplate and appendages practically identical with those worn by Aaron. Such coincidence can scarcely be accidental' (Knight).

According to Professor Yahuda the influence of Egypt over the early Hebrews has been much underestimated by scholars obsessed by the Babylonian discoveries. It was in the Nile valley (he claims) that Hebrew as a literary language was evolved, that most of the early Biblical legends took their final colouring, that Paradise must be located, and even that the Book of Genesis was thrown into its present shape. He certainly succeeds in showing an extensive and hitherto unsuspected vein of Egyptianisms within the language of the

¹ Most authorities, however, derive the cherubs from Assyrian models.

Pentateuch, together with a surprising absence of Chaldaean linguistic traits.

Yet, to the ordinary reader of the Bible, nothing seems clearer than the stern resistance which the early Hebrews set up against the 'reproach of Egypt', against Egyptian idolatry, against city-dwelling, luxury, art, and particularly against that exaggerated interest in the bodies of the dead which was so characteristic of the Nile-dweller. There is nothing in the Bible to correspond with the Egyptian pyramids, food and treasure for the dead, Book of the Dead, or (save in one or two cases) mummies of the dead. In fact, nothing could show a greater contrast than the Hebrew and the Egyptian attitude towards the future life, as far as the Old Testament is concerned.

THE INFLUENCE OF ARABIA

Far more readily assimilated, we may well believe, was the influence of the kindred Semitic culture of Arabia. Here, as the fifteenth-century Minaean inscriptions¹ show, the Divine Name JAH² had survived from the most primitive times. What may have been the original meaning or root of this mysterious name is still in doubt. It is found (as *Ya* or *Yau*) on Babylonian tablets of 2000 B.C. and later, always as a Semitic Deity. It is found in name-compounds among the Ras Shamra tablets. It appears again in the Minaean records as the God of Heaven, Whose second name is Love (*Wadd*), and Who has His shining Hosts (*Sabaoth*). It may well be that here in Midian Moses learnt to call upon the 'Name of the LORD'.³

¹ For the date of the Minaean inscriptions see p. 80.

² JAH is the basic element in Jahweh, that is the Biblical JHWH, transliterated in the English Bible as 'Jehovah'.

³ In our Bibles the word LORD (printed in capitals) always represents the Hebrew JHWH, the Divine Name which the Jews were not allowed to pronounce.

But, as Daiches remarks,¹ 'the question is not where the Name came from, but what Moses put into it. For into that vessel a long line of Prophets from Moses onwards poured such a flood of attributes as never a priest in all Western Asia, from Babylon to the Sea, ever dreamed of in his highest moments of spiritual insight.'

Further interesting points arise in the Minaean inscriptions. God is known as EL, and the several gods of the Minaean pantheon as ELOHIM—both of which forms appear in the Biblical name for God. The priestess of Wadd is called a Levite (*lawiat*); and there are further verbal identities in the words for the sacrificial cart (*mekonah*), the cauldron (*mabsal*), a feast (*haj*), the tithe (*ma'ser*), the congregation (*kahal*), the sin-offering (*hattath*), and so on. In fact 'the Minaean inscriptions exhibit an extensive correspondence to the Hebrew ritual, and the vista is open for still more "light on the Bible" when Arabia comes at last to be scientifically explored'.²

A small detail of Minaean orthography may also be mentioned: the letter H is frequently used to indicate a vowel-sound. For instance Abram would be written either ABRM or ABRHM (Abram or Abraham).

THE RAS SHAMRA TABLETS

Ras Shamra, on the coast of Asia Minor opposite Cyprus, seems a far cry from Arabia, but there is reason to believe that the Phoenician inhabitants of this place, the ancient seaport of Ugarit, were in some way connected with Kadesh and the Negeb from the second millennium onwards.³

¹ Quoted by Driver, *Exodus* (Cambridge Bible).

² Montgomery, *Arabia and the Bible* (1934).

³ For the best account of the Ras Shamra discoveries, see J. W. Jack, *The Ras Shamra Tablets* (1935).

The site was discovered by Schaeffer and Chenet in 1929, and since then has been systematically excavated. Among the ruins, some of them remarkably well preserved and exhibiting traces of close intercourse with Egypt, a large number of very interesting inscribed tablets have come to light, dating apparently from the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C., that is, contemporary with those of Tell el Amarna. Amongst these tablets are some written in an archaic Semitic dialect, closely akin to Hebrew, and in a unique alphabetical cuneiform script which has recently been deciphered by Dhorme,¹ Gaster, and others.

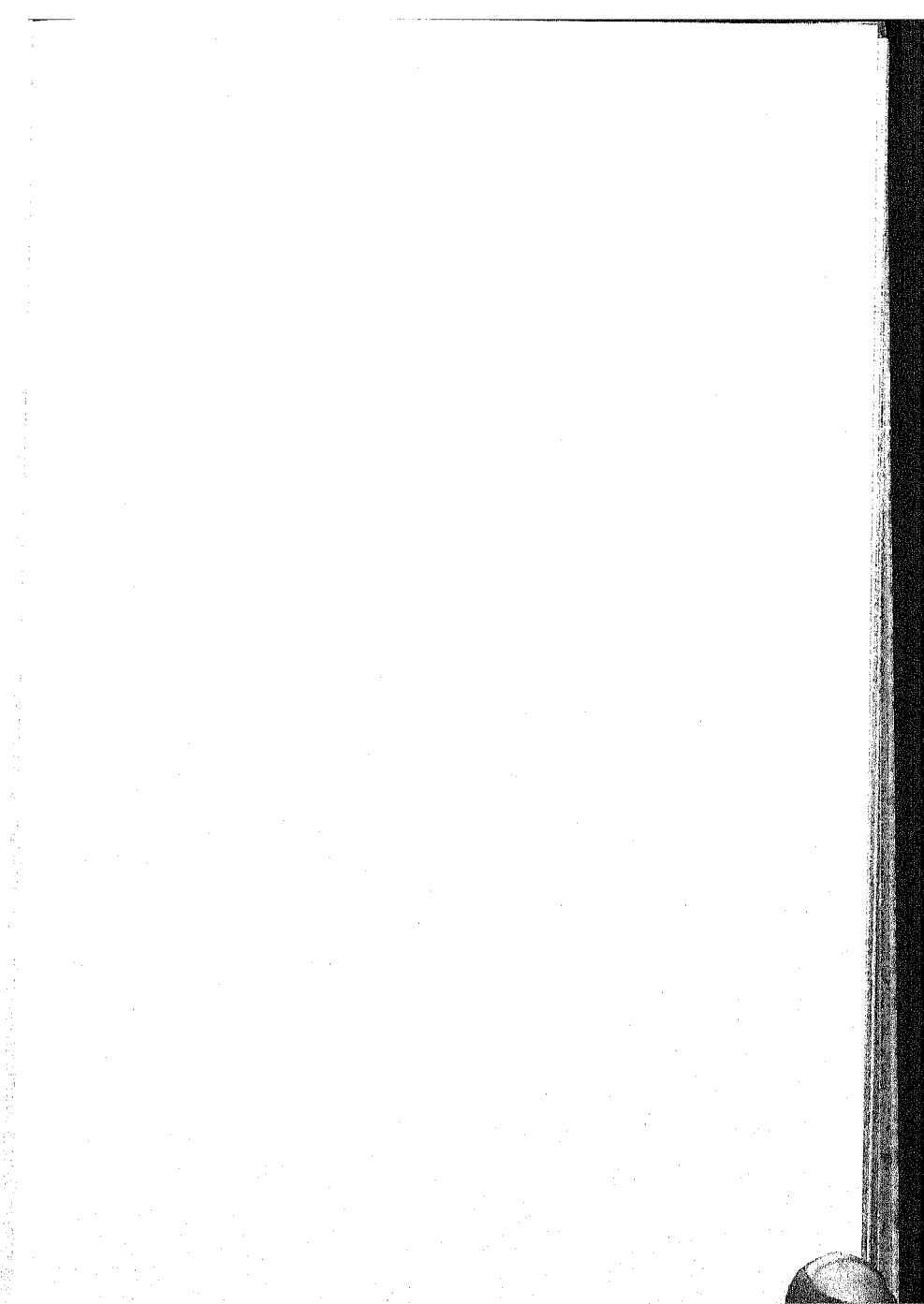
These tablets present a picture in this Syrian seaport of a Semitic culture and religion clearly related to those of Minaean Arabia, and once more many interesting parallels with Hebrew tradition and ceremonial may be drawn, although it seems as yet too early to decide what may be the precise relationship between the two.

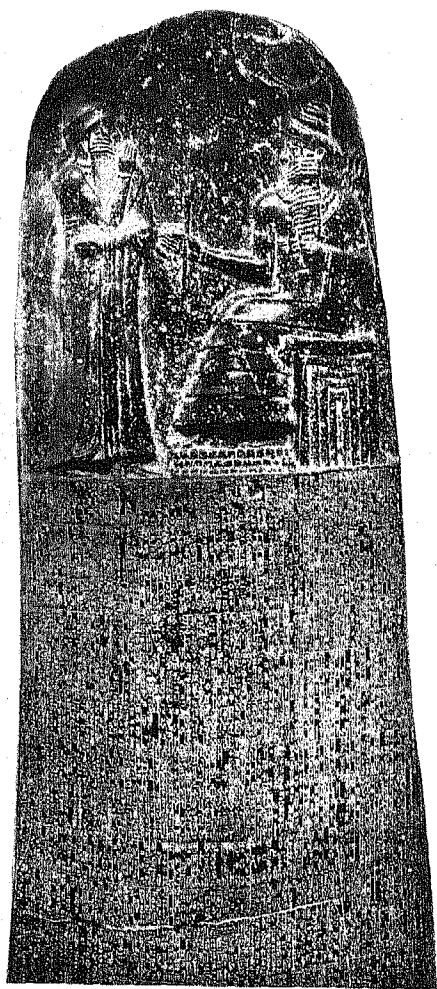
Dr. Jack² gives a long list of technical terms identical with those of the Mosaic Code, such as the words for Trespass Offering, Peace Offering, Wave Offering, First-fruits, Burnt Offering, and the like. The colony at Ras Shamra admitted to their pantheon such deities as Baal,³ Ashtaroath, Dagon, and Hathor, but appear to have accorded special prominence to a supreme deity known, as in Hebrew, by the name EL, or in the plural ELOHIM. The name JAH also appears in compounds. There is also an interesting reference to a god Salem, who may be the divinity after whom Jerusalem was named. And we read of a primeval hero called Daniel, who 'renders justice' to all.

¹ Dhorme, *J.P.O.S.* xi. 1; *W.O.P.* 187.

² See also Marston, *New Knowledge and the Old Testament* (1933); *The Bible is True* (1934).

³ As a god of the Underworld and an ancient enemy of Elohim, his name appears as Baal-Zebul.





12. THE STELE OF HAMMURABI

The oldest extant code of laws in the world, dated 2100 B.C. These statutes were in force in Canaan from the days of the Patriarchs and show many analogies with the Law of Moses.

Historically significant may be the recently discovered (1934) Keret Tablet mentioning a strife between Keret king of Sidon and the people of Asher on the one hand, and Zabulon together with the followers of Terah on the other—possibly an echo of the Hebrew invasion.¹

Further points of interest in these tablets may appear as they are fully deciphered. Already they are said to show some acquaintance with primitive Biblical tradition—with Adam, the 'Man from the East', for instance, and the 'cutting in pieces' of Leviathan.² We are assured, too, that the Wilderness of Kadesh is named as the birthplace of their religion. In a reference upon these tablets to a sacred object called ED (stone of testimony) Gaster believes 'we may see the prototype of Israel's "ark of testimony" (*Eduth*), later interpreted as the receptacle of divinely inscribed "tablets of testimony"'. For further references to the Ras Shamra tablets, see the Index.

THE CODE OF HAMMURABI

The most interesting and important discovery, however, in connexion with the subject of this chapter is the famous **Code of Hammurabi** found at Susa by de Morgan in 1901, and now in the Louvre. It is a rounded slab of black diorite³ inscribed in cuneiform at the command of Hammurabi king of Babylon about 2100 B.C., surviving almost intact as he left it, and containing nearly 300 carefully tabulated laws, with a prelude in honour of the Sun-god, and an epilogue denouncing a curse upon any one who should deface it.

¹ Note how the Song of Deborah mentions the defection of Asher, Judges 5¹⁷.

² See above, p. 16.

³ Diorite—an igneous rock composed of feldspar and hornblende. It had been inscribed in Babylon, but carried 'captive' to Susa by a Persian conqueror.

The publication of this Code¹ early in the present century caused great excitement among Biblical students, for it was seen at once to cast a brilliant light upon Hebrew legislation. Here were actually commandments on a table of stone, inscribed by the very Amraphel king of Shinar who had fought with Abraham hundreds of years before the days of Moses, and—most remarkable of all—containing many enactments which correspond exactly with some of the laws laid down at Sinai. The correspondence was observed to be particularly close in precisely that section of Hebrew legislation which was claimed by scholars to be most primitive in the Biblical text, namely, the 'Book of the Covenant' (Ex. 20²²-23).²

Here, for instance, are some striking parallels:

EXODUS

XXI. 16. *He that stealeth a man . . . shall surely be put to death.*

28. *If an ox gore a man or a woman that they die, the ox shall be surely stoned. . . . but the owner of the ox shall be quit.*

29. *But if the ox were wont to gore in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death.*

XXII. 2. *If the thief be found breaking in, and be smitten that he die, there shall be no bloodguiltiness for him.* (But the Hebrew adds that this only applies to burglary by night.)

HAMMURABI

14. If a man has stolen a man's son under age, he shall be slain.

250. If a mad bull has rushed upon a man and gored him, and killed him: that case has no remedy.

251. If a man's ox is known to be addicted to goring, and he hath not blunted his horns, nor fastened up his ox: then, if his ox hath gored a freeman and killed him, he shall pay half a mina of silver.

21. If a man hath broken into a house, before the breach shall he be slain and there buried.

¹ For full discussion of the Code see C. H. W. Johns, *The Oldest Code of Laws in the World* (1903); S. A. Cook, *The Laws of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi* (1903). For the Babylonian text (in roman print) and a literal translation into German, see H. Winckler, *Die Gesetze Hammurabi's* (1904).

² Marked as E, but recognized as extracted from an archetype far earlier.

EXODUS

XXII. 10. *If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass or an ox . . . to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it: the oath of the LORD shall be between them both, whether he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods; and the owner thereof shall accept it.*

12. *But if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof.*

13. *If it be torn in pieces, let him bring it for witness; he shall not make good that which was torn.*

XXI. 23. The principle of the Lex Talionis, or exact retaliation, e.g. *Eye for eye, tooth for tooth.*

HAMMURABI

266. If a stroke of God hath occurred in a fold, or a lion hath slain, then the herdsman shall clear himself before God, and the owner of the fold shall meet the disaster to the fold.

267. But if the herdsman is in fault: then he shall restore the cattle which he hath caused to be lost.

263. If he hath lost an ox or sheep that hath been entrusted to him, he shall replace ox by ox to the owner.

244. If a man hath hired an ox or an ass, and a lion hath killed it in the open country, that is to the owner.

196. If a man hath destroyed the eye of a freeman, his own eye shall be destroyed.

200. If a man hath knocked out the teeth of a man of the same rank, his own teeth shall be knocked out.

That the principles of the Code were known and practised amongst the earliest Hebrews seems clear from the patriarchal stories of Genesis, as when the barren Sarah gives her maid Hagar to Abraham for the purpose of raising children (Gen. 16), or Rachel acts in the same manner with Jacob and Bilhah (Gen. 30). However repugnant to later Hebrew notions, all this was quite in accordance with ancient Semitic law, as shown by the Code:

144-6. If a man has married a wife, and that wife has given to her husband a female slave who has children by him . . . he shall not marry that concubine. If a man marries a wife, and she has not presented him with children . . . if that man marries his concubine and brings her into his house, then that concubine shall not rank with his wife.

Similarly, when we read how Hagar presumed upon her position, and Sarah dealt hardly with her (Gen. 16, 21), again it was all in accordance with the Code:

It a man has married a wife, and she has given her husband a female slave who bears him children: and afterwards that slave ranks herself with her mistress, because she has borne children, her mistress shall not sell her for silver.

Sarah was, in fact, merciful, for she might have consigned Hagar to slavery: 'The concubine shall be fettered and counted among the slaves.'

In general, the circumstances of the Babylonian and the Hebrew codes are very similar. The community is mainly pastoral and agricultural, with a certain amount of commercial organization. There is a strong distinction between the rights of freemen and slaves. Family life, marriage, and concubinage are carefully regulated, the rights of the father being paramount. Contracts are ratified and oaths taken under religious sanctions: the phrases *shall bring him unto God* (Ex. 21⁶) and *shall come near unto God* (Ex. 22⁸) are illuminated by similar expressions in the Code. In both legal systems wilful murder is regarded as a matter for private vengeance, the relevant laws dealing only with accidental homicide or manslaughter. There is a similarity in the penalties meted out: death is frequent in both codes, together with fines and retributive compensation. Among the crimes which fall within the law, witchcraft and magic are included.

All these striking resemblances led people at first sight to believe that they had found the original of the Mosaic legislation. It was even used as a rationalistic argument that Moses had after all only 'copied' his famous laws from the pagan Babylonian.¹

¹ Cf. C. Edwards, *The Hammurabi Code* (1904).

Historically this was not impossible. The Code of Hammurabi belongs to an epoch far earlier than that of Moses, but in estimating its possible influence upon the latter, we have to remember that it remained well known for centuries after its first promulgation. The slab in the Louvre was only one of many such copies of the Code. They were broadcast throughout the Babylonian Empire, and remained a text-book for students up to the days of Ashurbanipal.

But the opinion is now generally abandoned that the Mosaic 'Book of the Covenant' was in any sense a copy of the Code of Hammurabi. The Code itself, as recent research has shown, was by no means original: it embodied or 'copied' laws which had been current for centuries before Hammurabi, for centuries even before the Semitic occupation of Babylonia. A comparison of the known Sumerian, Assyrian, and Hittite laws shows that there were common principles of legislation spread over the whole of the Near East, and that the statutes of Hammurabi were largely a codification of these, rather than a distinctive innovation. As the mainspring and inspiration, therefore, of the Babylonian Code we must assume some archetypal body of Common Law infinitely more ancient, and emanating in all probability from Arabia, the motherland of the Semites. 'The evidence', says Cook, 'does *not* suggest that Israelite legislation was to any considerable extent indebted to Babylonian, and the parallels which have been observed are to be ascribed most naturally to the common Semitic origin of the two systems. . . . It is to the Arabia of the nomads that we must turn for Semitic legislation in its earliest form.'

If the conjecture is correct that both Hammurabi and Moses based their legislation on an earlier common original, it would account both for the many resemblances and also

for the not less remarkable divergencies between the two codes, the latter showing that there must have been 'an independent history of generations, perhaps of centuries behind them'.¹

We have not space to examine these differences in detail. In many respects it is now claimed that the Hebrew Code represents a more primitive version of the archetype than the Babylonian. From the ethical point of view it marks, on the whole, a considerable advance. The ten varieties of bodily mutilation, for instance, which the Babylonian Code prescribes for various offences, are missing from the Hebrew.² In the latter, too, a more humane treatment of slaves is enjoined, a greater value set on human life, and a stricter regard for the honour of womanhood. Finally, the Code has nothing in it corresponding to that twofold golden thread which runs through the Mosaic legislation, the motives of the love of God and the love of one's neighbour. Jeremias thus summarizes the essential difference in spirit between the two Codes: 'In the Babylonian there is no control of lust: no limitation of selfishness through altruism: nowhere the postulate of charity: and nowhere the religious motif which recognizes sin as the destruction of the people, because it is in opposition to the fear of the Lord.'

¹ T. H. Robinson, *Palestine in General History* (Schweich Lecture, 1929).

² Except in Deut. 25¹², where the wife's hand is cut off. In the Code a doctor's hand is cut off after an unsuccessful operation!

VIII

THE HEBREW CONQUEST

THE period we have now reached is almost as obscure as that of the Egyptian Sojourn, and the dates are still in doubt. The older School would postpone Joshua's invasion of Canaan until the reign of Merenptah (c. 1200 B.C.); but we may safely say that just as opinion is hardening in favour of an early date (c. 1447 B.C.) for the Exodus, so inevitably it is coming to accept an early date (c. 1400 B.C.) for the Conquest.

Forty years after the Exodus, then, bring us to 1400 B.C. or thereabouts. Amenhotep the Magnificent is still on the throne of Egypt, his temples and palaces resplendent as ever, his wealth beyond the dreams of any previous monarch, his imperial writ still running in distant Syria and Canaan. At first glance it seems an unpropitious time for Joshua to attack the outposts of Egypt.

But the Hebrew spies made no mistake. Though the centre seemed as firm as ever, the circumference of the empire began to show signs of breaking up as Amenhotep's luxury-sodden reign progressed. Of the state of affairs in Canaan at this time we have little evidence. A letter of Burna-Buriash king of Babylon about 1380 B.C. speaks of disaffection among the vassal kings of Canaan in the time of Kurigalzu, his father, probably about 1400 B.C. The Tell el Amarna tablets describe a tumultuous situation which must have been already in existence some years before the first of those tablets (1380 B.C.) was written. And in any case it is doubtful how far Amenhotep's vaunted¹ triumphs in Canaan at

¹ Amenhotep's records are not trustworthy. His inscriptions even claim supremacy over Mesopotamia! See J. W. Jack, *Date of the Exodus* (1925).

the commencement of his reign had really secured more than the great military roads of the maritime plain and the south. It is, therefore, not incredible that the Hebrew invasion should have occurred during the lifetime of the famous Amenhotep III.

For the period covered by Joshua's latest years and those of the Elders who succeeded him, we have plenty of evidence in the Tell el Amarna letters. These show quite clearly that the end of Amenhotep's reign witnessed a great decline of Egyptian prestige in Canaan. It had become difficult to interest the Pharaoh, now engrossed in artificial lakes, lion-hunts, and bull-fights, in the sterner business of empire. The vassal kings of Canaan, already weakened by the rapacious policy of the Egyptian Hornet,¹ were abandoned to their enemies. Their appeals for help were not even answered. While as for Amenhotep's successor Akhnaton (1375-1358), his over-absorption in religious innovations and his consequent unpopularity left the empire more than ever a prey to any enterprising invader. 'One stands amazed at the reckless idealism, the beautiful folly of this Pharaoh', writes Weigall,² 'who in an age of turbulence preached a religion of peace to seething Syria.'

So that for fifty years after the date which we assume for the Invasion of Joshua, namely, from 1407 to 1358 B.C., the supine policy of the Pharaohs afforded the Hebrew tribesmen just the opportunity that was needed for the unimpeded reduction of the Canaanite forts and the settlement in Central Palestine.

¹ Garstang, following Hollingworth, sees in the phrase, *I sent the hornet before you which drove them (the Canaanites) out* (Josh. 24¹², &c.), a hidden allusion to Egypt, whose hieroglyph was a hornet.

² A. E. P. Weigall, *Akhnaton, Pharaoh of Egypt* (1910).

JOSHUA'S INVASION

Recent events in Palestine supply an interesting comment on Joshua's crossing the Jordan on dry ground (Josh. 3 JE). Sixteen miles up the river, at a place still called Damieh (the Adam of the Bible story), the cliffs rise many hundreds of feet high, forming a deep, narrow gorge through which the stream flows very rapidly, especially at the season of floods (Josh. 3¹⁵). Owing to corrosion or to earth-tremors the cliffs at this point frequently collapse, completely blocking the river with a natural dam.

This happened as recently as 1927, when the newspapers reported that the waters from upstream were blocked for twenty-four hours, so that many people crossed and recrossed the river Jordan on foot.

After safely landing his forces on the western bank, Joshua at once proceeded to the reduction of Jericho.

Excavations on the site of this fortress (El Riha) show that the defences of the city at about 1400 B.C. consisted of two parallel walls of brick erected on somewhat insecure foundations of uneven stone, and rising probably to thirty or forty feet. Over the space between the walls cross-beams of timber had been laid, and upon the timber had been built ordinary dwelling-houses, such as Rahab occupied when she *dwelt upon the wall* (Josh. 2¹⁵ E).

The excavations further showed that some extraordinary catastrophe had overwhelmed the city about 1400 B.C. At this date¹ the outer wall had collapsed down the slope of the hill on which the city was built, dragging with it the inner

¹ In dating its fall about 1400 Garstang merely confirmed previous estimates by Sellin and others, but his conclusions are supported by the evidence of nearly 100,000 potsherds and scores of scarabs. Excavations at Ai, Bethel, Hazor, &c., yielded similar results. See also W.O.P. 5.

wall. The ruined city had then been set on fire. Reddened masses of brick, cracked stones, charred timber, and ashes all gave evidence of a conflagration of intense heat.

More than this, the excavations showed that after the destruction of the city, there was a distinct break in the pottery and other deposits, proving that the ruin of Jericho had been not only complete but lasting, thus fulfilling Joshua's curse on any one who should rebuild it (Josh. 6²⁶ JE). There is no trace of any repair of the city between 1400 and the year 860 B.C., when Hiel the Beth-elite rebuilt it (I K. 16³⁴). In other words, if Joshua (as the older view implied) had attacked Jericho as late as 1200 B.C., he would have found no walls to 'fall down flat'.

The collapse of the walls of Jericho has a parallel in the recent earthquakes (1927) which shattered two whole streets of houses in Nablus, and at Jericho itself caused the walls of the hotel to fall down flat with consequent loss of life.

THE TELL EL AMARNA TABLETS

It is unfortunate that the short period of the 'elders' who succeeded Joshua, and the oppression by Cushan-Rishathaim which evoked the first of the Judges should be so cursorily treated in the Bible (Jud. 2⁷-3¹¹), for this, it would seem, on a dead reckoning from the Biblical time-notes, must have been the very period covered by most of the celebrated Tell el Amarna tablets.

In 1887 a countrywoman of Tell el Amarna on the Upper Nile found in a rubbish-heap the collection of inscribed clay tablets which has made the name of her village famous. Hundreds of them were unhappily destroyed by over-eager 'excavators', but about 300 found their way on to the market: and great was the excitement when it was realized that here,

after nearly a century of Egyptian excavation, was a discovery which put all the others in the shade, at any rate so far as Biblical studies were concerned.

For what the woman had found was the buried filing-cabinet, as it were, of the capital of King Akhnaton,¹ and the tablets were letters and dispatches sent during the far-off years 1380-1360 B.C. to the court of Amenhotep III and his successor Akhnaton.

But the thrilling fact about the tablets was that most of them had been written in the Holy Land, written to their Egyptian overlord by the kings of Canaanite cities named in the Bible, by the king of Jerusalem itself. Here, indeed, was the first certain mention of the Holy City in the records of the past. Here, too, to all appearances, was the first explicit mention of the Hebrew people.

The Tell el Amarna tablets, in short, threw an entirely new light on one of the darkest, yet most important, periods of Palestinian history, and opened a new epoch in the study of Biblical and indeed of Egyptian archaeology, revolutionizing in many ways our notions of the ancient history of the Near East.

One of the big surprises was to find that the letters were nearly all written in Babylonian cuneiform. By this time the Canaanites had a well-developed language and probably an alphabet of their own (pp. 5 ff.), while Egypt was even better furnished, but it seemed that correspondence between the two countries was carried out in the ancient *lingua franca* of the Babylonian tongue, couched in the crabbed cuneiform script of the past two thousand years.

The Letters reveal that the Land of Canaan (*Kinakhna*), while still ostensibly a province of the Egyptian empire, was

¹ The name of the new capital was Akhetaton.

in a state of extreme turmoil. The vassal kings were sending frenzied appeals to the Pharaohs for help against formidable invaders from the north and east, protesting that unless reinforcements arrived quickly, the country would be lost to Egypt for ever. Fortress after fortress was falling into the enemies' hands. 'Is there no one to deliver me out of the hand of my enemies?' writes Rip-Adda of Byblus, for instance. 'I am like a bird caught in a trap.' But the indolent Pharaoh answers never a word. Already Egypt is earning her reputation as *Rahab that sitteth still* (Is. 30⁷).

But who were these enemies of whom the Letters speak?

THE HITTITES

In the north, of course, the restless Hittites, that mighty nation or confederacy of nations which it is one of the major triumphs of archaeology to have rescued from oblivion. We have already noted the appearance of the *Hatti* (Hittites) on the Karnak inscription of Thothmes III. It was Sayce who first identified these mysterious *Hatti* with the Hittites of the Bible, whose existence had hitherto been described as legendary. Since the publication of Sayce's *Story of a Forgotten Empire* (1892), a score of actual Hittite cities have been excavated throughout their extensive empire, stretching from Smyrna to Erzerum, from Niobe to Tel Halaf and Carchemish, from Zenzirli and Hamath in northern Syria to Kara Eyuk and Boghaz Keui by the Halys river. Striking monuments, inscriptions, and tablets of a highly developed civilization lasting over two thousand years have been discovered in the present century.¹

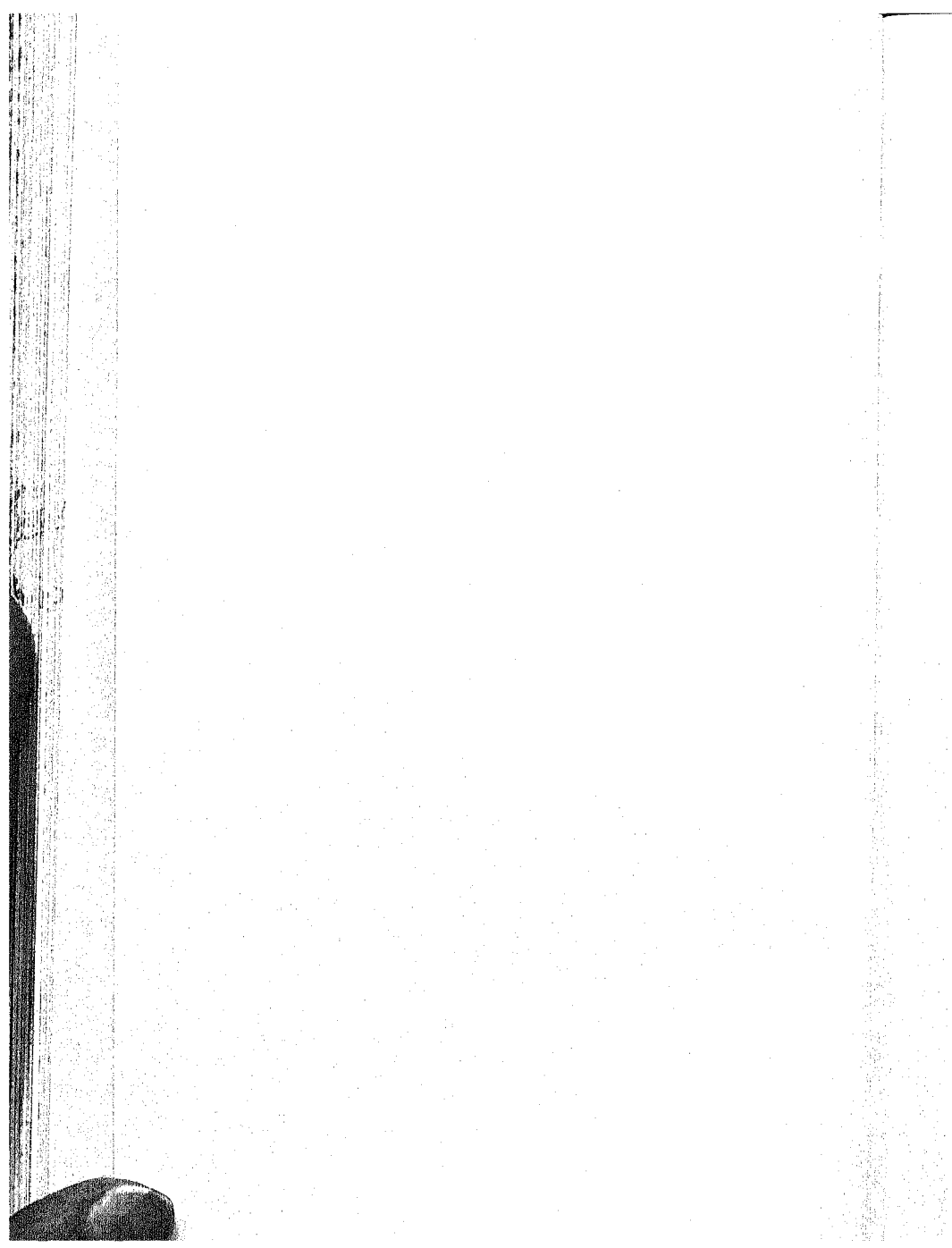
One of the greatest achievements has been the interpreta-

¹ For Hittite excavations see W.O.P. *Tell Halaf* 14; *Carchemish* 727; *Hittites* 827.



13. THE ENEMIES OF ISRAEL

Contemporary portraits of (1) The Hittites; (2) The Canaanites and Amorites; (3) The Philistines.



tion¹ of the long-dead Hittite language or rather languages, and the decipherment of the cuneiform script in which they were sometimes written; though the quaintly jumbled hieroglyphic script of many of their inscriptions still remains an unsolved enigma.

Contemporary portraits show the Hittites as a thick-set folk with retreating foreheads, high cheek-bones, clean-shaven, and with what we should call a 'Jewish' nose.² They wore the snow-shoe with upturned toe and fingerless mitten still favoured by the mountaineers of Cappadocia. They understood the art of metal-working in gold, bronze, silver (whence the name *Hatti*), and even iron as early as 2300 B.C., as tablets from Kara Eyuk prove. Their works of art, statues, frescoes, monuments, are strangely strong and beautifully quaint. In religion they believed in the 'divine marriage' of the goddess of Nature (Sun, Earth, &c.) to the Jupiter-like god of Power and Thundering might.

The history of the Hittites in general falls rather outside our scope, but we must briefly bring it up to the date of the Tell el Amarna letters. Their first king, Pamba, is dated 2750 B.C., but it was not until the beginning of the second millennium that King Hattusil formed a great empire with its capital at Hattusas (Boghaz Keui), and began to penetrate into the Bible Lands. It will be remembered that about 2000 B.C. Abraham is said to have had dealings with them (Gen. 23 P); and according to Duncan there are many signs of Hittite inroads into Palestine about that time, when possibly (it has been suggested) they may have been concerned in the Hyksos invasion of Egypt.

¹ By Hrozný in 1919.

² 'The typical "Jewish" nose is the Armenoid nose of the Hittites', acquired by the former through racial admixture (Prof. C. G. Seligman, 1931).

It is not until the time of Thothmes III (1500) that they 'enter the political history of Western Asia in the full light of history' (Garstang). Their own records from then onwards are continuous, and there are many references to them in the Egyptian monuments.

Among these we include the Tell el Amarna tablets, telling of the Hittite invasion of Northern Palestine in the early fourteenth century. 'Let my lord the King of Egypt know', writes Akizzi of Katna, 'that now the king of the Hittites has burnt our cities with fire, and carried off their gods and their inhabitants. . . . The King of the Hittites has taken up his quarters in the land of Nukhazi, and I fear he may go up into the land of the Amorites.' The king in question appears to have borne the delightful name of Subbiluliuma, and to have reigned during the whole period of the tablets.

Among the Hittite archives at Boghaz-Keui are some tablets which the writers would have found it awkward to explain, had they been published 3,500 years ago instead of yesterday. They reveal that several of the Canaanite kings, while 'bowing down seven and seven times' to their Egyptian overlord, were actually in treacherous communication with the Hittite invader, even as they had been years before with Babylon. Truly affairs in Canaan had come to a pretty pass, and Joshua had chosen his time well.

As things turned out, however, the dreaded Hittite invasion of Palestine proper never materialized. Other interests diverted their energies, chiefly the young but vigorous kingdom of the Mitanni in northern Mesopotamia. It is a remarkable coincidence, as Garstang points out, that just at this time (if our estimate of the chronology is correct) the Biblical narrative should suddenly mention Mesopotamia and its king Cushan-Rishathaim among the oppressors of Israel

(Jud. 3⁷⁻¹¹). The Hittites, at any rate, withdrew for the time being; but in the meantime they had opened a gate through which another and more persistent invader crept in.

THE HABIRU

While the letters from northern Palestine were bemoaning the incursions of the Hittites, and of still more bloodthirsty bands of *Sagas* and *Sutu* marauders who acted as jackals to the Hittite lion, the letters of Arad-Hiba¹ king of Jerusalem, in the south, complain of the attacks of a people not elsewhere named in the tablets, whom he consistently calls the 'Habiru'.²

'The Habiru', he writes, 'are now capturing the fortresses of the Pharaoh. Not a single governor remains among them to my lord the King: all have perished. Zimrida of Lachish has been killed. May the King send help. Lo, if no reinforcements come this year, all the countries of my lord the King will be utterly destroyed. . . . The land of the King is lost to the Habiru. And now indeed a city of the territory of Jerusalem, Bet-Ninib, has been captured. . . . After taking the city of Rubuda, they are now attempting to take Jerusalem. . . . What have I done against my lord the King, that thou lovest the Habiru, and hatest the governors? . . . The Habiru have wasted all the territory of the King', and so on.

It is more than tempting to identify these Habiru with the Hebrews of Joshua's invasion.

It is agreed, that as far as the name goes, Habiru and Hebrew are identical. 'If Habiru does not mean Hebrew, then no name has been found in Babylonian or Assyrian to desig-

¹ *Arad-Hiba*, otherwise spelt *Abdi-Hiba*, or in older works *Ebed-Tob*.

² It is interesting to note that the Ras Shamra tablets, believed to be contemporary with those of Tell el Amarna, also mention the *Sagaz*, the *Sutu*, and the *Ibrim*.

nate this important people' (Jack). Moreover, the circumstances of the Habiru invasion are precisely, on the face of it, those of the Hebrew invasion, as regards the date, the locality, the results, and the actual place-names concerned.

The evidence with respect to the last is both negative and positive. Thus, why should the important cities of Bethel, Hebron, and Jericho remain unmentioned in the tablets, if not because they had already been destroyed by Joshua? On the other hand, the references to Jerusalem, Lachish, and Shechem imply just the situation described in the Bible¹: the first two cities besieged but not taken, the last falling into the Hebrews' hands (Josh. 24¹ E). In the words of the tablets: 'They are now attempting to take Jerusalem. . . . Gezer, Ascalon, and Lachish have given oil, food, and supplies to the Habiru. . . . Labaya and the land of Shechem have given all to the Habiru.'

The identification of Habiru and Hebrew in the fullest sense is therefore now widely, though not universally, accepted.² In other words, the Tell el Amarna tablets are believed to paint from the Canaanite side the same picture which the historian of Joshua-Judges paints from the Hebrew

¹ That is, in the oldest JE documents, on which alone we rely for our present purpose. The D insertions paint a more optimistic picture of the Hebrew successes.

² The older school of Biblical scholars, believing that the Hebrews did not leave Egypt until two centuries later than the Tell el Amarna period, naturally denied the Habiru-Hebrew identification.

To them, Habiru was merely an alternative name preferred by Abdi-Hiba for the marauders elsewhere called Sagaz. In support of this they could show that: (1) no tablet mentions *both* the Habiru and the Sagaz; (2) tablets (Hittite) have been found at Boghaz-Keui giving temple lists in which the 'gods of the Habiru' are apparently equated with the 'gods of the Sagaz'. The suggestion was that the Habiru thus formed part of the Hittite-Sagaz-Sutu invasion which swept down from the *north* and could not therefore be identified with Joshua's invasion from the *east*.

side, thus not only fixing the date of the Conquest but greatly illuminating it in every way.

If this is the case, it is disappointing at first sight that no Biblical personal names can be identified with certainty in the Tell el Amarna records. The attempt, it is true, has been made. Thus Toffteen, Olmstead, Marston, Garstang, and others detect the name of Joshua¹ himself in a letter of Mut-Baal to Yankhamu. The names of the kings of Jerusalem, Lachish and Hazor are quite different from those given in the Bible, but here again Arad-Hiba has been equated with Adoni-Zedek.²

Two facts, however, must be kept in sight. First, it is next to impossible to identify cuneiform names apart from their context. Who, for instance, would recognize a familiar friend in Khishiarshi, *alias* Akhshiwارشu?³ And secondly, the period of the tablets is not that of Joshua so much as that of his immediate successors, about which the Bible tells us very little. There was plenty of time between the Invasion (1407) and the first of the tablets (1380) for the thrones of Jerusalem, &c., to have changed hands half a dozen times.

Of the characters named in the tablets, two may be mentioned as having a special interest for us, since they cast some light on the Biblical story of Joseph, once Canaanite vizier of Egypt.

A Canaanite evidently in high favour at the Egyptian Court was one Dudu (= David?). To him writes Aziru the Amorite: 'Whatever is the wish of Dudu, let me know, and

¹ Under the form *Yashua*. Olmstead, *Palestine and Syria*, pp. 188, 198.

² Arad-Hiba = Arta-Hiba (Hittite) = The Righteousness of the god = Zedek-El = Zedek-Adoni (Dhorme, Hommel).

³ Viz. Xerxes.

I will do it. . . . Thou sittest in the presence of the King my lord as a high dignitary.'

The position of Yankhamu, another *émigré* from Canaan, offers a still closer analogy to that of Joseph. He acted as deputy of the Pharaoh in the grain-growing district of Yarmuta, probably in the Delta. The tablets are full of complaints against his high-handed methods. 'Our sons are gone, because we were forced to give them for food to Yankhamu. . . . All has been given to Yankhamu for our life's necessities.' In one letter we are told that a hostage sent from Canaan had been detained in his house.

It has been suggested that Yankhamu facilitated the Hebrew settlement. 'The Habiru were allowed to settle down with the consent of the Egyptian High Commissioner Yankhamu, who showed himself friendly to them, or even in league with them. Consequently they were never harried with fire and sword as revolting Amorites and others were' (Jack).

IX

THE SETTLEMENT IN CANAAN

THE Book of Judges¹ covers an exceedingly debatable period. We have brought the story of the Hebrew invasion down to 1360 B.C. with a fair show of independent evidence to supplement the Biblical narrative. But from that date until the coming of the Philistines, a space of roughly two hundred years, we are very much in the dark. All we can say for certain is that Egypt was still nominally mistress of Canaan, but that her effective control was both limited in extent and spasmodic in action, so that the years 1360 onwards are by no means an impossible period for the triumphant settlement of the Hebrews in the central highlands of Palestine.

The Bible does not help us much. Garstang and others, it is true, have made a valiant attempt to sort out the Biblical data into some sort of chronological order, and many extraordinarily interesting suggestions have been put forward linking up the narrative of Judges with various fixed points in Egyptian history. But the general opinion of scholars remains unshaken: that the Biblical historian preserves of this period no more than the memory of a few national or rather tribal heroes, whose biographies have been spaced out by an artificial scheme of dating so as to fill up the requisite '480 years' from the Exodus to the Temple (I K. 6¹).

Nevertheless, since recent scholarship tends, as we have said, to confirm the factual basis of this '480 years', and to maintain an early date for the Exodus and Conquest, it follows that presumably many of the pre-Philistine Judges may

¹ For commentary see Burney's *Judges* and again Garstang's *Joshua-Judges*.

be assigned to the period we are now discussing, and that therefore all Egyptian references to Canaan at this time are very much to the point.

EGYPT AND THE JUDGES

The situation, then, appears to have been as follows, linking Biblical with Egyptian events.

The reigns of Akhnaton's successors, Sakere (1356), Tutankhamen¹ (1356-1350), and Harmhab (1350-1314) gave the empire forty years of rest. An inscription of Tutankhamen shows the Pharaoh receiving a body of Syrian envoys:

The chiefs of Palestine who knew not Egypt since the time of the god [i.e. Akhnaton's religious reforms] are craving peace from His Majesty. They say, There shall be no revolters in thy time, but every land shall be at peace.

Equally interesting is a monument of the reign of Harmhab, showing him extending hospitality to a number of Syrian refugees:

Others have been placed in their abodes: they have been destroyed and their towns laid waste; their countries are starving, they live like goats in the mountains; they come begging a home in the domain of Pharaoh, after the manner of their fathers' fathers from the beginning.

It is tempting to see (with Garstang) a reference in these inscriptions to the *forty years of rest* following the deliverance wrought by the Judge Othniel (Jud. 3¹¹), and to identify the dispossessed Syrians mentioned above with Canaanites defeated by the Hebrews.

The forty years of peace ended on the accession of Seti I (1314-1292). In the very first year of his reign he had to

¹ The wonderful discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb by Carter in 1922 added little to our knowledge of Biblical history. W.O.P. 41.

face trouble in Palestine, Beth-Shean being specially mentioned in one of Seti's inscriptions as having been 'besieged by the wretched enemy who was in the city of Hamath', evidently the Hittites. Another inscription of this reign mentions the Sutu of the Tell el Amarna tablets:

In Canaan the vanquished Shashu (= Sutu) are planning rebellion, rising against the Asiatics of Southern Palestine. They have taken to cursing and quarrelling, each of them slaying his neighbour, and they disregard the laws of the Palace.

This may well represent, from the Egyptian point of view, the Biblical stories of 'oppression' and the triumphant uprising of the Hebrew tribes against it. One may even hazard a more definite conjecture, assigning to this reign the northern incursion of Jabin and Sisera, whose name is said to be Hittite.¹ In that case, the *Song of Deborah*, admittedly one of the very oldest passages in the Bible, would date from this epoch, and its reference to the tribe of Asher which *sat still at the haven of the sea* (Jud. 5¹⁷) would receive an unexpected shaft of light from yet another of Seti's inscriptions. On his temple at Redesieh he is represented holding some captives by the hair and threatening them with a club. These captives are named, amongst others, Shashu (Bedouins), Megiddo-ites, and Asuru, the last (it is generally agreed) being none else than the Hebrew tribe of Asher. This is the earliest mention of a Hebrew tribe by name outside the Bible, except for the reference to the Tribes of Asher and Zabulon in the so-called Keret Tablet of Ras Shamra mentioned above.²

¹ Rather than Egyptian (Sise-Ra) as once suggested.

² See p. 87. It is suggested that the name Keret is concealed in the Cherethites, members of David's newly-formed bodyguard (II Sam. 8¹⁸), who may have been recruited from a district near Gaza known in the Tablets as the Negeb of Keret. See J. Garstang, *Heritage of Solomon* (1935), pp. 350, 371.

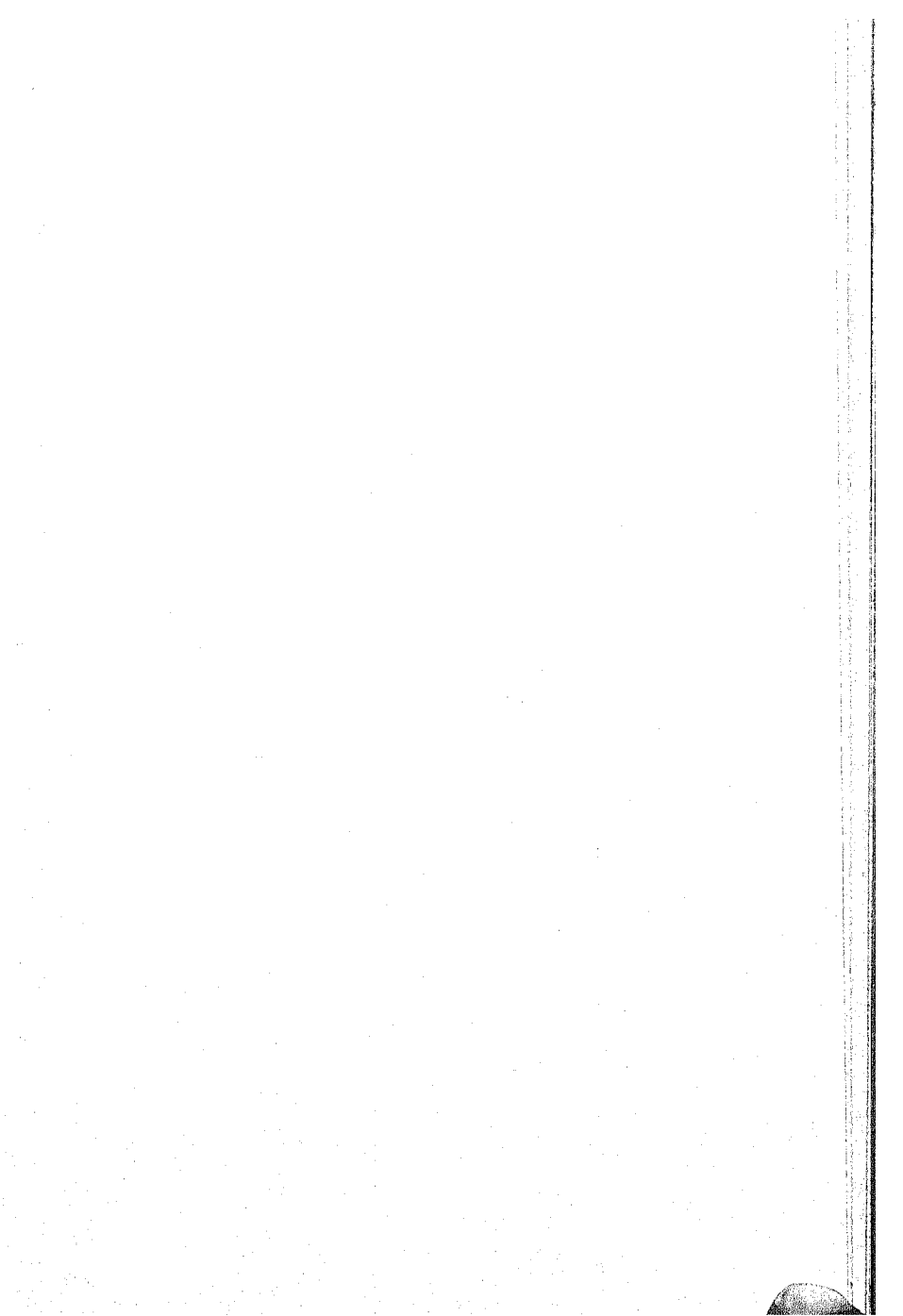
As if to clinch the connexion of Seti I with the Hebrews, a stele of this reign was discovered by Fisher¹ at Beth-shean, in 1923, giving the names of Palestinian tribes conquered by the Egyptian arms, amongst which are the Syrians (*Retenu*), Canaanites (*Aamu*), Bedouins (*Shashu*), and a people called the Aperiu, or Apriu. This is the earliest mention of these Aperiu,² but we shall meet with them frequently after this. The word is apparently an Egyptian attempt to reproduce the name Habiru or Hebrew. We have thus considerable evidence from the records of Seti I to support the belief that the Israelites were already settling in Canaan during his reign.

But, it will be asked, if Seti was so successful in Canaan, how is it that the Hebrews were allowed to retain possession of the country? Jack deals faithfully with this objection: 'One thing is of prime importance—there is no trace in Seti's campaigns of any occupation of Central or Southern Palestine, which would be the territory in which the Hebrews of the Exodus were settled at this time. . . . Practically all the places taken possession of by Egypt after the time of Amen-hotep II were located either in the far north or in the Maritime Plain and Shephelah.'

This explains, too, the notorious difficulty that in all the Biblical account of the Conquest and Settlement there is practically no mention of Egypt among the enemies of Israel. 'The military campaigns of Seti I and his successors left the Israelites practically untouched in the narrow highland terri-

¹ See Jack, *op. cit.*, p. 59. Aperiu is variously spelt: Apuriu, Apriu, Aperiu, Apure, &c.

² The word Aperiu, meaning merely a 'crew', occurs earlier than this. There is also a reference to the people Aperiu as being in Canaan during the reign of Thothmes III. If this were correct, the Aperiu were in Canaan long before the Exodus from Egypt, and, therefore, could not be identified with the Hebrews. But see below, p. 110, note.





14. RAMESES THE GREAT

The finest known portrait-statue of Rameses II, the Pharaoh who brought 'fourscore years of rest' to Canaan in the time of the Judges. He reigned 1292-1225 B.C.

tory which they at first occupied. . . . They were able to continue without molestation from outside during three-quarters of a century of Egyptian inaction and pacifism. And there is no evidence to show that the part of the land mainly occupied by them was ever retaken by Egypt.'

EIGHTY YEARS OF EGYPTIAN PROSPERITY

We have now entered on a period of continuous Egyptian prosperity and regained strength, beginning with the last years of Seti I, persisting throughout the whole of the long reign of Rameses the Great (1292-1225), and the beginning of Merenptah (1225-1215)—fourscore years in all, from 1301 to 1221. During this period we may well believe that the land of Canaan 'had rest', overawed by the near presence of the Egyptian policeman. And it seems very credible that this long calm is remembered by the Biblical historian in the phrase *the land had rest fourscore years* (Jud. 3³⁰), as Garstang suggests.

Rameses commenced his reign with a determined effort to crush the Hittites, now grown to the maximum of their power, and the only serious rivals of Egypt. A terrible battle was joined between the two empires at Kadesh on the Orontes. Both sides claimed the victory, but both were glad to make and keep a treaty of peace, the terms of which have been preserved as well in the Egyptian inscriptions¹ as among the Hittite tablets of Boghaz Keui.

During this campaign the Pharaoh's forces must have thundered continually along the Great North Road through Palestine, though without touching the interior. Thus the only Hebrews who were affected were the tribes of the far north, and sure enough we once more meet Asher on an

¹ Especially in the Great Hall of the Temple of Rameses at Abu-Simbel. W.O.P. 177.

Egyptian record of Merenptah's campaigns in Canaan. We also find the Aperiu turning up again on the inscriptions, henceforward not as resident in Canaan, but always as a foreign people employed by the Pharaohs on work in Egypt itself. How is this to be explained?

We have already noticed these Aperiu, whom we ventured to identify with the Hebrews, among the Canaanite tribes conquered by Seti I. A second reference, in an historical romance written at the time of Rameses the Great, locates them at Joppa.¹ But all subsequent mention of these people describes them as living in Egypt. Thus Rameses the Great (c. 1280) tells us that they 'brought up stones for the great tower of Pi-Ramessu', and twice associates them with the Egyptian army. Rameses III (c. 1190) connects them with chieftains, nobles, and colonists in Egypt. Rameses IV (c. 1160) numbers 800 of them among the 'bowmen of Anu'. After that we hear the name no more.

Perhaps the best way of harmonizing these puzzling notices is to suppose that the Aperiu were Habiru or Hebrews, some of whom were taken to Egypt as mercenaries or prisoners of war, and laboured there until the advent of the Philistines put an end to Egyptian campaigns in Canaan.²

These were great days in Egypt for the writing of romances or novelettes of a semi-historical or wholly fictional character. Among them is one preserved in the Papyrus Anastasi, called the *Travels of Maher*. Here the author describes

¹ The reference here is to a story of the siege of Joppa (Harris Pap. 500) fictionally set in the far-off days of Thothmes III (1500 B.C.). T. E. Peet, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, xi. 225 (1925).

² Others, however, adopting the 'Late Date' view of the Exodus, identify the Aperiu with the Hebrews of the Oppression in Egypt—a very unlikely story; while others deny any connexion at all between the Aperiu and the Hebrews.

Canaan as a dreadful place for a gentleman to live in (the work is not without humour), but clearly not too dreadful for an Egyptian tourist to explore. Among the spots visited were Tyre, Sidon, Jezreel, Megiddo, Joppa, and Gaza—places situated chiefly, it will be observed, not in the Hebrew territory, but on the Great North Road.

Returning to the inscriptions proper, there is one name on a record of Rameses the Great which has been noted as possibly linking up this reign with the period of the Judges. 'Many a foreigner of Semitic blood found favour and ultimately high station at the Court of Egypt at this time. . . . For instance, a Syrian sea-captain named Ben-Anath (i.e. Son of Anath) was able to secure a son of Rameses the Great as a husband for his daughter' (Breasted). Garstang gives evidence for presuming an advance attack of Philistine sea-rovers upon the shores of Canaan even at this early date, and would connect this Ben-Anath with Shamgar the son of Anath named in the Song of Deborah (Jud. 5⁶).

So far it must be admitted that the evidence for the presence of the Hebrews in Canaan during the fourteenth century is stronger in its cumulative effect than in any individual item. But with Merenptah's¹ famous Israel Stele, discovered by Flinders Petrie in 1896, we come to a very explicit indication.

This inscription, self-dated as 'the third year of Merenptah' (i.e. 1223 B.C.), tells in poetical form the glorious victories of the Pharaoh in Canaan:

Devastated is Tehennu;
The Hittite Land is pacified;
Plundered is Canaan with every evil;
Carried off is Ascalon;

¹ Merenptah, otherwise Merneptah, Mineptah.

Seized upon is Gezer;
Yenoam is made a thing of naught;
Israel is desolated, her seed is not;
Palestine has become a defenceless widow for Egypt;
Every one that is turbulent is bound by King Merenptah,
Giving life like the sun every day.

There is now no controversy among scholars about the identification of Israel on this inscription, or about the location of the tribe in Canaan. Here we have the earliest appearance of the name of Israel outside the Bible, and the natural inference is that the Israelites were already settled in Canaan early in the thirteenth century.

The point thus raised is of extreme importance, for previous to the discovery of this stele, the view that the Israelites remained in Egypt until the reign of Merenptah, and did not reach Canaan until about 1220 B.C. at the earliest, had remained almost unchallenged. Thus Rameses the Great was described as the 'Pharaoh of the Oppression' and Merenptah as the 'Pharaoh of the Exodus'. Even to-day the supercilious mummy of the former still frowns over clawlike hands in most of our 'Bible illustrations', and as late as 1909 Merenptah's mummified heart was sent to the Royal College of Surgeons to see if it was really 'hardened'.¹

The discovery of the Israel Stele, however, together with that of the Tell el Amarna letters, and of Asuru and Aperiu in the inscriptions, all seems to show that the Hebrews had been gone from Egypt and settled in Canaan long before the days of Rameses or Merenptah. It is true that many scholars refuse to abandon the earlier view. The Habiru, they say, were *not* the Hebrews, nor were the Aperiu either. As to Asher

¹ As a matter of fact, Dr. Shattock reported that it was—from a disease called *atheroma*.

and Israel, the appearance of these names on the inscriptions simply proves that part of the Hebrews had never left Canaan at all! For the most ingenious attempt to reconcile the jarring sects, the palm must go to those¹ who would have us believe in a double Exodus, one in 1447 and the other in 1144 B.C.; which, however, seems to have satisfied few.

The Israel Stele, commemorating Merenptah's triumphs in Canaan, had scarcely been set up, when a coalition of entirely fresh enemies from overseas—the same Libyans, Phrygians, Sardians, and Achaeans who were soon to besiege Troy—threatened the very existence of the empire. They were beaten off, but the effort was costly: for twelve years after Merenptah's death Egyptian prestige reached its lowest ebb under the last monarchs of the XIXth Dynasty.

To this period belongs a romance called the *Tale of the Two Brothers* by one Anna, a scribe of Seti II. It runs briefly thus: "There were two brothers, Anup the elder and the younger Bata, who were much attached to each other. One day when they were ploughing together, Bata went to his elder brother's house for some seed, leaving Anup in the field. On finding the young man in the house, Anup's wife attempted to seduce him, but in vain. None the less, when Anup came home that evening, she complained that Bata had outraged her. Anup, believing her story, rushed back to the field to slay his brother, but the latter was protected by the sun-god and escaped. After many adventures all ended happily, for he became King of Egypt!"

This quaint story has often been compared to that of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. But Gardiner points out that it is really a religious myth, Bata and Anup (Anubis) being

¹ e.g. O. A. Toffteen, *The Historic Exodus* (1909).

intended for Immortals. In any case there is no need to dwell upon coincidences in stories revolving round so commonplace a plot.

Nor is there any need more than briefly to mention a certain Arisu,¹ who lived about this time, and who has been put forward as yet another of the many 'prototypes' of Joseph. Of him we read in the Harris Papyrus that 'During years of famine, Arisu, a Canaanite, raised himself to be a prince in Egypt, compelling all the people to pay him tribute. Whatever they had gathered together, that he robbed them of.'

THE DECLINE OF EGYPT

The XXth Dynasty opened gloriously with the powerful monarchs Set-Nekht (1200-1198) and Rameses III (1198-1167). Twice the latter repelled raids made by the piratical sea-rovers from the Aegean already mentioned. The second of these raids is important for us, since in the Egyptian records the Philistines (*Pelesetu*) are now mentioned for the first time, those mysterious intruders who were destined to leave their name for all time in Palestine, the Land of the *Pelesetu*.

We shall hear little more of Egypt for the next 250 years.² There is an inscription of Rameses III mentioning 'the miserable king of the Amorites, and the leader of the hostile bands of the Bedouins conquered by the might of Pharaoh', which may be no more than an idle boast. There is also a brief sentence from an inscription of Herihor (c. 1100) indicating that he still laid formal claim to suzerainty over Canaan: 'The chiefs of the Retenu do obeisance to my fame every

¹ Otherwise written *Alisu*.

² There are no historical inscriptions, save those mentioned in this paragraph, until we come to Shishak (930).

day'. If this claim were true (which nobody believes) it would imply that the Philistines, then supreme in Palestine, still regarded themselves as agents of the Pharaoh.

Showing how merely nominal was the hold of Egypt over her northern 'province' at this period, the *Story of Wen-Amon* (from an Egyptian papyrus of the eleventh century) may here be quoted:¹

Wen-Amon, envoy of the Pharaoh, sailed for Caesarea to procure cedar from the Lebanon. Rebuffed here, he moved on to Byblus, where he was kept waiting no less than three weeks before gaining admission to the king's presence, only to be rudely told that the supremacy of Egypt was no longer recognized in Syria. An appeal to religious sentiment, however, proved more successful: Wen-Amon obtained his timber. But his troubles were by no means ended. After terrifying adventures with pirates and a storm at sea, he was cast upon the hostile island of Cyprus . . .

Here the papyrus tantalizingly breaks off.

After the time of Rameses III, in fact, 'there is evidence to show that Egyptian prestige in Canaan began to fade rapidly, even from the memory' (Garstang), so that it becomes easy to understand why the mention of Egypt as a power to be reckoned with appears so seldom in the Biblical narrative of the Judges.

Egypt, then, is no more. The Hittites have been broken in pieces by Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria (c. 1100), their name and culture alone surviving among the 'Kings of the Hittites', their capital no longer at Boghaz Keui but at Carchemish.² The tribal Judges have dealt faithfully with the surrounding Canaanites, either by conquest or absorption. Henceforward the destinies of Palestine depend upon the result of the

¹ Weigall, *Treasury of Ancient Egypt*, p. 112.

² For the Neo-Hittites see below, p. 125.

inevitable clash between Philistine and Hebrew—on the deliverance wrought by Samson, Eli, Samuel, and the Kings.¹

THE PHILISTINES

Who were these Philistines that so nearly wrested the Promised Land from Israel? After much research, their origin still remains uncertain. They appear to have come from the Aegean islands by way of Crete (*Caphthor*), their armour and portraits showing them to have resembled not a little the Achaean warriors of Homeric times. From the beginning of the XXth Dynasty they were largely employed by the Egyptians as mercenaries, and were afterwards allowed as a reward to settle on the shores of Canaan. Thus about 1190 B.C. and onwards we find them firmly established on the maritime plain, first as Egyptian vassals, but every year increasing in independence and power, as the star of the Pharaohs waned.

The date of the Philistine supremacy over Palestine (c. 1118–1026) and thus of the last phase of the Judges is not seriously questioned, so that now at length the scholars of the early and the late school join hands in amity. But there are few actual remains of the Philistine occupation: of their art and literature (if any) practically none—a fact which lends force to the popular use of the name Philistine to-day.

Some few characteristically Philistine remains in the shape of pottery, weapons, architecture, and so on, have been identified at such places as Beth-Shemesh, Gath, Gerar, and Beth-Pelet. At Gerar, for instance, a sword-furnace has been

¹ The older school of Biblical scholars, however, see in the situation here described the most likely opportunity for the Hebrew invasion of Canaan (under Joshua). Hebrew and Philistine, they say, were contending for Egypt's abandoned prey.

unearthed, a small cubical receptacle with a flue, showing signs of violent heat. To such a forge as this the Hebrews must have brought their implements to be reset (I Sam. 13¹⁹). Here, too, the discovery of iron of about 1150 B.C. has confuted those who regarded the Biblical references to iron as anachronisms.

Very interesting is a Philistine tomb at Beth-Pelet. 'In one tomb dating 1100 B.C. the coffin had a pottery mask which gives some idea of the Philistine type of face—a large aquiline nose, short beard under the lower lip, and plaited locks' (Duncan). In the tombs were many weapons of bronze or iron, side by side with old-fashioned flint knives and sickles such as the Hebrews were still compelled to use.

At Gezer has been excavated a Philistine house of the type which Samson pulled over the heads of his enemies (Jud. 16²⁹). 'Sometimes a chamber was too wide to be spanned by a single roof beam. In that case two lengths of timber were used, their ends supported by a column. It is probable that such columns were of wood, but a flat stone was placed under their feet to support them. To slip the pillar from the footstones would not be an impossible task for a strong man, and to do so would obviously bring the house down' (Macalister).

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE CONQUEST

Such is practically all the available archaeological evidence for the Conquest and Settlement of Israel in Canaan from about 1400 to 1000 B.C.

It is not very much to show for all the excavations of the past century, but, after all, it is perhaps as much as we could expect. The Hebrews of these early years were not builders, as the Bible clearly shows: they destroyed cities, but did not

rebuild the shattered walls. Thus no Hebrew architecture earlier than the Monarchy survives to tell its tale.

Nor did the 'squatter settlements' of the early Hebrews leave any distinctive examples of handicraft or art. They seem to have adopted without much modification the utensils of their Canaanite environment. For this reason the pottery remains both of Palestine and Egypt tell us little about the Hebrews as such; while of Hebrew inscriptions and of inscriptions alluding to the Hebrews there is, as we have said, a remarkable dearth. Thus 'the early part of the Hebrew period, prior to the founding of the Kingdom under Saul, is practically a blank, so far as definite archaeological knowledge of the Hebrew civilization is concerned' (Duncan).

PART III

THE MONARCHY AND AFTER

X

THE EARLY MONARCHY

FOR our present purpose the 'Early Monarchy' extends from Saul (*c.* 1036), David (*c.* 1010), and Solomon (*c.* 970) to the early years of Asa and Omri (*c.* 886).

During these hundred and fifty years the Hebrews settled down as a victorious nation with capital cities, public buildings, and fortresses of their own, developing a distinctive art in some degree, and probably commencing to keep and to collect their national written records, so that their archaeological remains are naturally more extensive than before.

Yet the excavations have produced no very spectacular results—no treasures of delicate workmanship, no awe-compelling edifices, no inscriptions of an interest in the least comparable with the discoveries in Egypt, Mesopotamia, or even Hittite-land. Practically nothing remains to-day of the glory of Solomon or the Hebrew monarchs of that age save a few rough blocks of masonry and some pieces of broken earthenware. Yet it is wonderful how the modern archaeologist can piece such fragments together and read their story.

OLDEST JERUSALEM

It is impossible even to name all the sacred sites which have been excavated during the past century, especially since the formation of the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1865. Some of them we have already mentioned; a few others we shall note as we go on; but for the fascinating story of such

places as Lachish, Gezer, Taanach, Beth-Shean we must refer the reader to the many specializing books. Here, however, we must pause to look for a moment on the Jerusalem of the Early Monarchy.

Biblical Jerusalem was roughly a rectangle divided into four squares and held in the cleft of the Kidron and Hinnom valleys. The original city was on the hill of Ophel, the bottom right-hand square, which now lies outside the modern city and can therefore be excavated. Here have been found traces of an original neolithic occupation going back to perhaps 3000 B.C. As a walled city, however, Ophel seems to have been fortified about 2000 B.C., when there are signs of a mingled Amorite and Hittite construction of considerable strength, not brick like most of the former citadels, but stone, thus giving point to Ezekiel's remark: *Your mother was an Hittite, and your father an Amorite* (Ezek. 16⁴⁵), and lending colour to the tradition in Josephus that the city was founded by the Hyksos refugees from Egypt. The King of Jerusalem of the Tell el Amarna period still bore a Hittite name, Arad-Hiba, and already the city was known as Uru-Salim.

By the time of David these original fortifications had apparently been still further strengthened by a double wall, the city's name having been changed to Jebus. The Jebusite walls, and signs of the breach made by David's well-known assault upon the place, can still be seen. But the most interesting discovery is that of the underground passage by which Joab penetrated into the citadel, and so took the garrison by surprise (I Chron. 11⁶), known by the name of its discoverer as Warren's Shaft.

Of this Macalister writes: 'I myself followed Joab's example when I explored the tunnel—I passed through at dead of night. . . . Wading through the water in the cave,

carrying their weapons and probably a rope, they entered the tunnel that opens at the back of the cave. They would follow it West for 32 feet, after which it turns abruptly North and runs for 23 feet by a branch passage impassible except at low water. Here in Joab's time the tunnel ended in a chamber, at the side of which rose a vertical shaft about 50 feet high. Some expert climber in the party clambered up. . . . With the help of a rope another and then another drew himself up until they were all landed safely in the little chamber at the top of the shaft. From this they passed along the upper passage, which gradually rises by a gentle slope to a flight of steps at the end. Mounting these, they stood within the city.'

Thus the archaeologist brings that exploit of three thousand years ago to life.

On Ophel, too, David's 'tower that lieth out' has been identified, showing how his rough and hasty masonry had been repaired by Solomon's more carefully dressed stones. The Millo, or 'filling', which David threw up to protect the breach he had made, has been located at the north-east corner of the citadel; here, too, the marks of Solomon's strengthening masonry are clearly distinguishable. One of the curiosities of this tower was the discovery of faint traces of a painting of the goddess Ashtaroth, pathetic reminder, perhaps, of one of Solomon's wives.

Of the royal palace and temple, however, no certain traces have been found, chiefly no doubt because they were situated on the upper right-hand square in our rough plan, that is on Mount Moriah, north of Ophel. The site is therefore within the modern city, and beneath the present 'Dome of the Rock'. 'So long as these sanctuaries remain under the guardianship of a suspicious people, hostile to research, so long will it be

impossible to seek for any relics of the Solomonic buildings. But even if it were possible, it is improbable that much would be discovered. Nebuchadrezzar was nothing if not thorough: and Herod, when laying the foundations of his own ambitious structure, would show but scant courtesy to the work of his predecessors' (Macalister). All we can say is that the huge stone slab within the present Dome of the Rock most probably marked the spot where Solomon's altar stood. The channel which conveyed the blood of the sacrifices to an underground cavern beneath the altar is still visible.

Perhaps we should add that none of the Old Testament sites in the modern city, such as the 'Tower of David' or the 'Tomb of Absalom', are authentic. 'Few ancient cities have so suffered from haphazard nomenclature as Jerusalem: at every turn there are names that seem to take us back to the days of the kings and earlier, whereas in fact the remains of even the Jerusalem of Herod's time are not numerous' (Garstang).¹

The one authentic relic of Solomon's magnificence, the noted **Solomon's Stables**, seems to have survived, not in the Holy City, but at Megiddo, one of the forts restored by him at the beginning of his reign (I K. 9¹⁵). Here Guy found masonry of Phoenician type, 'executed by Hiram on his way home from building the Temple', the most interesting feature being a huge garage for chariots, and stables for a hundred horses. 'Between each horse was a stone pillar, to which, as holes drilled in them show, the halters were attached. Between each pillar there was a stone manger. Access to the stables was provided by broad streets quite well paved and planned.'

But it must be admitted that the study of buried masonry and tumbled walls which forms such a large part of Palestinian

¹ W.O.P. 567.

excavation is very much an acquired taste, and many readers will sympathize perhaps with the inscription of a tired workman found on the wall of the Maccabean palace at Gezer—'Pampras says: To blazes with Simon's palace!'

THE POTTERY DEPOSITS

More difficult still for the amateur to appreciate is the rapture with which the modern archaeologist gazes upon what he calls a 'potsherd'. Yet the value of these often unbeautiful relics lies precisely in their lack of attraction: people throw their broken pots away, no one troubles to pick them up, yet they are almost imperishable, and remain perhaps for ever just where they fell, to be covered by layer after layer of the dust of time. Then some archaeologist comes along and fixes the precise date of a site by merely checking off the pottery levels. Hence the supreme importance of the humble shard.

In itself Hebrew pottery is exceptionally uninteresting. It has no beauty of colour, design, or workmanship, nor is it even original. It is identifiable, in fact, chiefly by its inferiority to other pottery of the same period and locality. Thus 'Hebrew ware', says Duncan, 'is very easily recognized in the pre-Exilic period. It is a totally distinct type and inferior to the Canaanite in workmanship, though the forms are largely borrowed from them. The ware is lumpy, badly baked, and clumsy. It shows no marked originality: but though the Hebrews imitated, they imitated badly. In the post-Exilic period the deterioration is even more marked than in the pre-Exilic.'

All this certainly helps one to appreciate the inwardness of Jeremiah's account of how he *went down to the potter's house . . . and behold, the vessel that he made of the clay was marred in the hand of the potter* (Jer. 18³).

Duncan observes that the explanation of this Hebrew inadequacy in the ceramic and indeed in other arts must simply be that 'the genius of the race did not lie in that direction, but almost exclusively in the line of religion and morals. . . . In every sphere but religion they seem to have been under the domination of other races and civilizations.'

SAUL, DAVID, SOLOMON

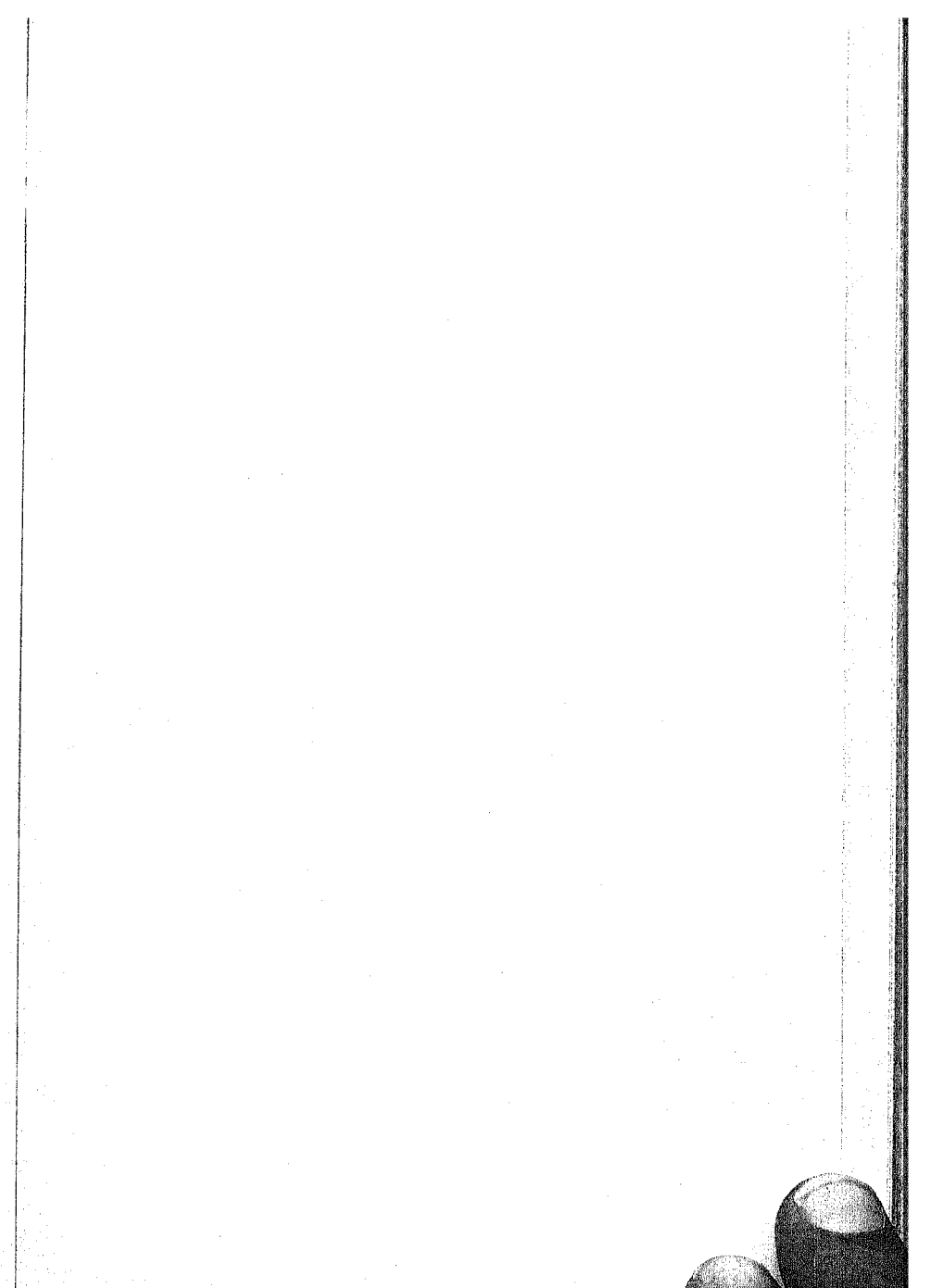
Of the history of those three famous kings, Saul, David, Solomon, or even of their existence, there is no trace whatever outside Palestine, despite the fact that the two last at any rate were potentates of some international importance.

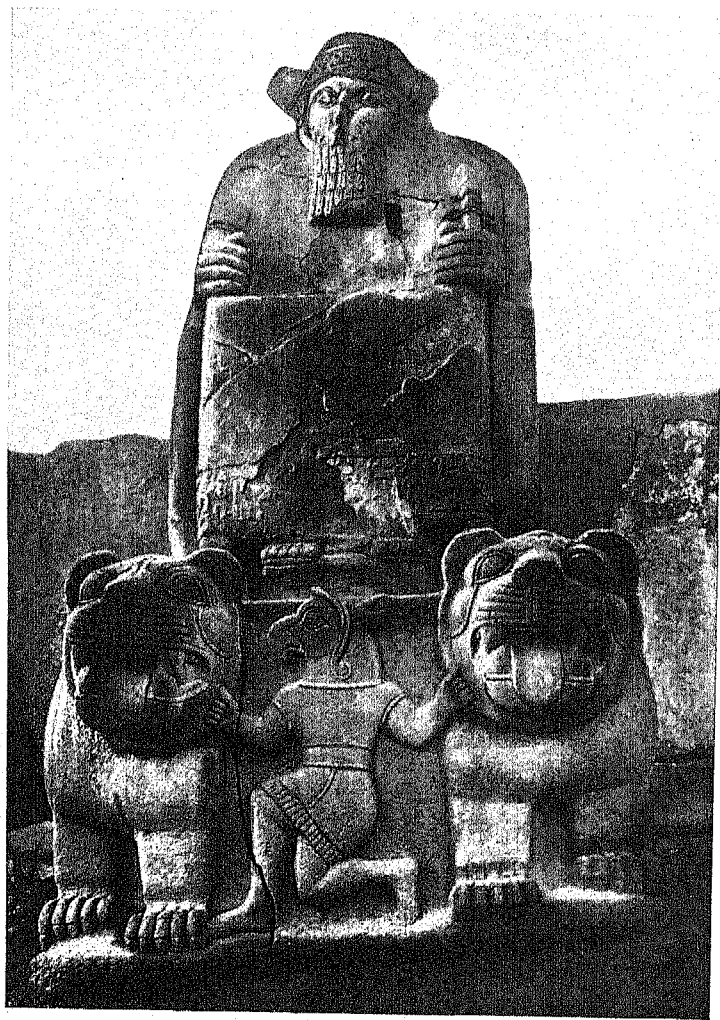
Egypt at this time was in a state of confusion and decay, a house divided against itself under the simultaneous XXIst and XXIIInd Dynasties, so that historical records are practically non-existent. We cannot even know the name of the Pharaoh who married his daughter to Solomon (I K. 3¹): whether it was Pasebkhane II (Knight), Siamon (Robinson), or Shishak (Breasted). Yet excavations at Gezer, which the Pharaoh gave as *a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife* (I K. 9¹⁸), show traces of Egyptian occupation and damage, together with subsequent Hebrew repairs. Macalister found that of the deities worshipped in the town, the most popular was Besh, the Egyptian god of dancing and revelry.

Of the Queen of Sheba all we can say is that the excavations in Arabia have revealed an advanced civilization, named after her city 'Sabaeen'—probably the successor of the Minaean civilization described above,¹ and that the Assyrian inscriptions of a somewhat later age speak of the ruler of these Sabaeans as a queen.

The Biblical statement that Solomon levied a tribute on

¹ See pp. 84 ff.





15. A NEO-HITTITE GOD

A deity of the 'Kings of the Hittites', excavated at Carchemish, throned upon lions with their eagle-headed attendant.

the *people that were left of the Hittites* (II Chron. 8⁷) and that later on a king of Israel was able to *hire* the Kings of the Hittites (II K. 7⁶) will excite astonishment, until we remember that the great Hittite empire of the days of Thothmes, Tell el Amarna, and Rameses the Great was now a thing of the past. Their power had already passed its zenith when Rameses defeated them at Kadesh (1288), but 'the great disaster occurred about 1200 B.C. When the Homeric bards sang the siege of Troy, which fell within a few years of that date, the place of the Hittites was already being taken in popular legend by the Phrygians, who had joined, it would appear, in the destruction of their power. . . . The new invaders (Phrygians, Philistines, &c.) carried all before them, leaving the Hittite lands and Northern Syria desolated in their trail . . . and blotted out the memory of the Hittite power that had bound its heterogeneous races together for 1500 years.'¹ From that date until a few years ago their ancient capital at Hattusas (Boghaz Keui) lay buried in forgotten ruins.

But before their collapse the Hittites had founded the city of Carchemish on the Upper Euphrates, and here the 'people that were left of them' established another but a far less powerful kingdom, where, though much of the ancient Hittite art, writing, and culture was preserved along with the imperial name, the dominant racial note seems to have been Semitic. 'Thereafter, the "Hittites" appear in the records of Assyria and in the Bible, as a Syrian confederacy' (Garstang). Unfortunately the type of Hittite script they favoured most was not the cuneiform but the still undecipherable hieroglyphic, so that hardly any Neo-Hittite history is known to us.

¹ Garstang in W.O.P. 828. For the Neo-Hittites see D. G. Hogarth, *Kings of the Hittites* (Schweich Lecture, 1926).

These were the 'Kings of the Hittites', their southernmost centre at Hamath, with whom the Hebrew monarchs had dealings. Quite possibly it is among the undeciphered inscriptions of Carchemish, Zenjirli, Sakjegeuzi, or Aleppo that alone we can look for the names of David and Solomon outside the Bible.

THE INSCRIPTION OF SHISHAK

Not till the reign of Solomon's successors, Rehoboam and Jeroboam, do we once more make contact with the inscriptions.

Shishak of Egypt, the first Pharaoh to be actually named in the Bible (I K. 14²⁵, &c.), has left a bas-relief on the wall of the Temple of Amon at Karnak showing him dealing the heavy blows of his victorious club on the heads of captive Jews. Apart from the long rows of names, each in its embattled shield, there is no historical explanation of the campaign, which, however, we must connect in all probability with I Kings 14 and the year 931 B.C.

Amongst the conquered Jewish cities are mentioned Taanach, Beth-Shean, Adullam, Gibeon, Ajalon, Megiddo, Aroer, and many others. But the name which has attracted most attention is Judah-Melek, or rather J—U—DH—MA—LK.

At first this was impossibly interpreted as equivalent to Melek-Judah, King of Judah, that is Rehoboam. To-day it is frequently, though still very improbably, interpreted as Judah-Melek, that is Judah-royal, referring to the kingdom of Rehoboam. Max Müller, however, pointed out long ago that J—U—DH can scarcely, in Egyptian, represent Je-Hu-Da-H: the omission of the first H being incredible. The hieroglyphs in fact should be read JUD-Ha-Melek, that is

Yod-ha-Melek, the Hand (handiwork) of the King,¹ like Yod-Absalom (R.V. 'Absalom's Monument'), in II Sam. 18¹⁸. The temptation to see Judah on this inscription must therefore be resisted.

Curiously enough, very few of the towns mentioned appear to have been in Judah at all: 'Socoh and Arad are the only well-known towns in Judah whose names have been read' (Robinson). Of the seventy-five legible names, nearly all seem to have been in the territory of Jeroboam, Egypt's ally, and not in that of Rehoboam at all.

The most likely explanation of this strange discrepancy from the Biblical narrative seems to be that Shishak invaded the Northern Kingdom of his ally Jeroboam merely to recapture towns that had been previously filched from him by Rehoboam.

This is the last Egyptian inscription of any importance to Biblical history. The remaining records of the Pharaohs, right up to the Greek period, deal only with religious ceremonies and the interment of Apis bulls.

Relics of continued Egyptian intercourse with Palestine, however, are abundant, in the shape of scarabs, pottery, statuettes, jewellery, and so forth broadcast throughout the ancient world—blue-glaze Egyptian beads of this period have been found, in fact, as far away as our Stonehenge.

Many of these apparently Egyptian objects were faked even in those early days. Imitation scarabs were manufactured at Tyre and Sidon. There even arose a fashion of pseudo-Egyptian architecture, like the temple at Amrit built by the Phoenicians; and it is said that Solomon's Temple itself showed marked Egyptian influence in ornament and design.

¹ It is not impossible that Yod-ha-Melek may stand for Jerusalem itself (cf. I K. 14²⁵).

It may be that we must assign to this period the curious Egyptian-like rock-cut tombs which Mackenzie found at Beth-Shemesh, containing figures of Besh and Isis. Perhaps, as Knight suggests, they were prepared for the retinue of Solomon's Egyptian queen.

Nor can we utterly reject the possibility that the bull-worship¹ in the Northern Kingdom (I K. 12²⁸) may be connected with the Apis bulls of Egypt. It is true that the latter were living animals, but sacred models of cattle have also been found, like the gigantic Hathor-Cow discovered by Naville at Deir-el-Bahari. Astarte herself was frequently worshipped in Palestine as a Cow-divinity, many statues of Ashtaroth Karnaim (Horned Astarte) having been found.

Of the light thrown by archaeology on the High Places, Pillars, and Asherim which Judah still continued to build *on every high hill and under every green tree* (I K. 14²³), we have already spoken.²

¹ The word 'calves' was a derisive diminutive for the small size of the idols in question.

² See Chapter IV.

XI

THE HOUSE OF OMRI

IN this chapter we move forward from the last years of Omri to the accession of the two Jehorams in 842 B.C., thus arriving at the threshold of the Assyrian period.

The character of the most important archaeological evidence now changes: at long last we find contemporary inscriptions which for the first time deal explicitly with Hebrew history; and we have the thrilling experience of recognizing familiar Biblical names and situations in independent records written by men who were actually contemporaries of Elijah, Amos, and Isaiah.

We begin to see now what a narrow dividing line separates archaeology from literature. The heap of burnt bricks exposed by the excavator's spade turns out to be a library of books, none the less deserving of the name for being impressed on clay instead of printed on paper. It is a type of 'book', however, which (for the most part)¹ has one great advantage, not only over the literary remains of such ancient historians as Herodotus, Berosus, Manetho, and Josephus,² but even over the Bible itself: it is in the fullest sense *contemporary with the events described*. The tablets we handle to-day are the actual writings hot, as it were, from the kiln where their author placed them three thousand years ago.

Yet it is possible to exaggerate their value as evidence. The glamour of antiquity has too often obscured the very obvious fact that most of these inscriptions, whether on stone or clay, were indited by potentates with one eye on posterity and the other on immediate self-glorification. 'The accurate portrayal

¹ Some of the tablets are copies of earlier ones.

² See Appendix IV, 'Ancient Authorities'.

of events as they took place was not the guiding motive of the royal scribes . . . often it is clear that royal vanity demanded playing fast and loose with historical accuracy' (Luckenbill). The word of the monuments must not, therefore, always be taken against that of the Bible, as was once the tendency.

From the point of view of direct Bible illustration, the Assyrian period we are now approaching is far the best documented of all, and it happens at the same time to be one of the most vividly detailed in the Bible itself. Hence the study of it requires some patience. But until the student has mastered the outline of the Biblical narrative, a survey of the inscriptions will be both tedious and futile.

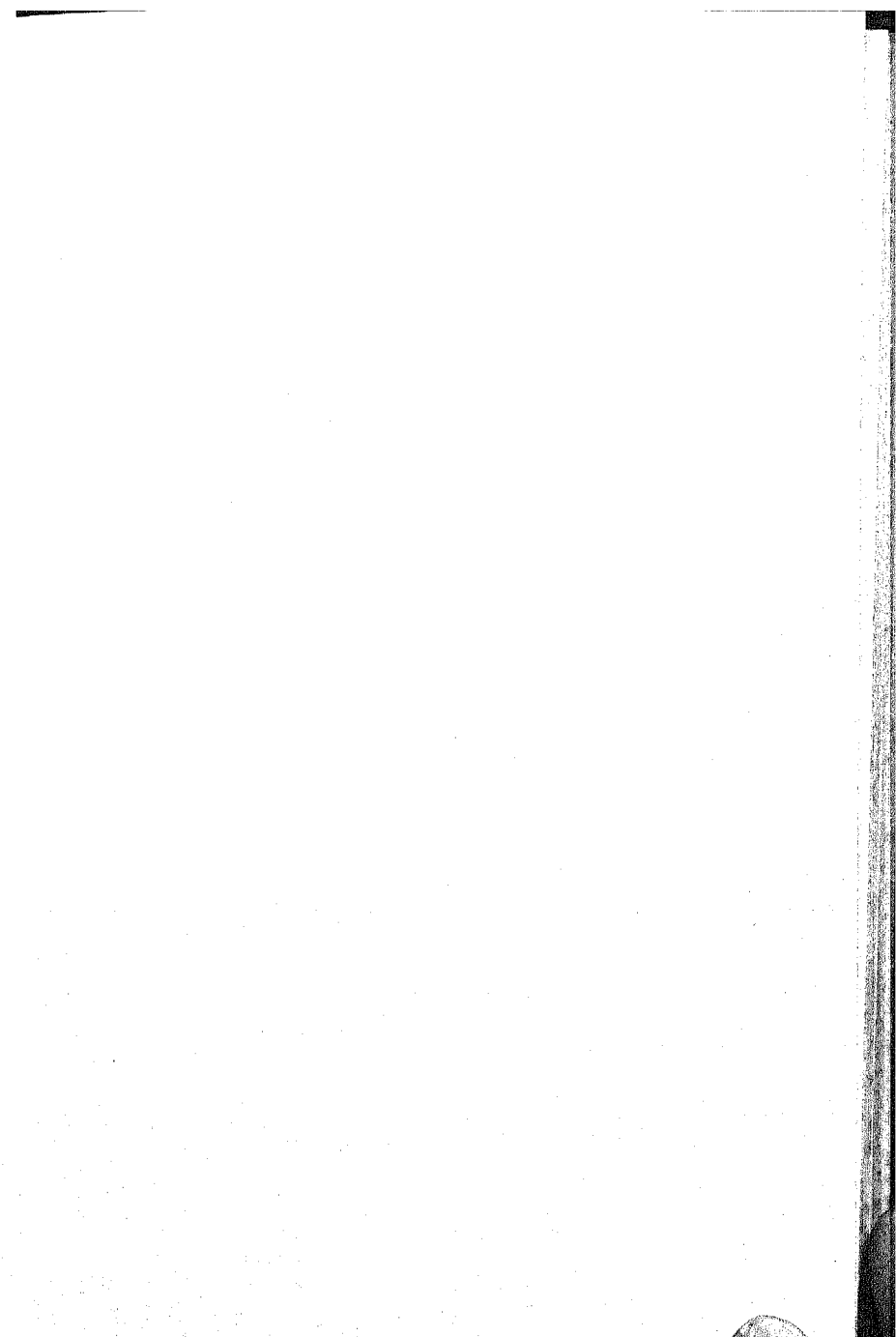
OMRI KING OF ISRAEL

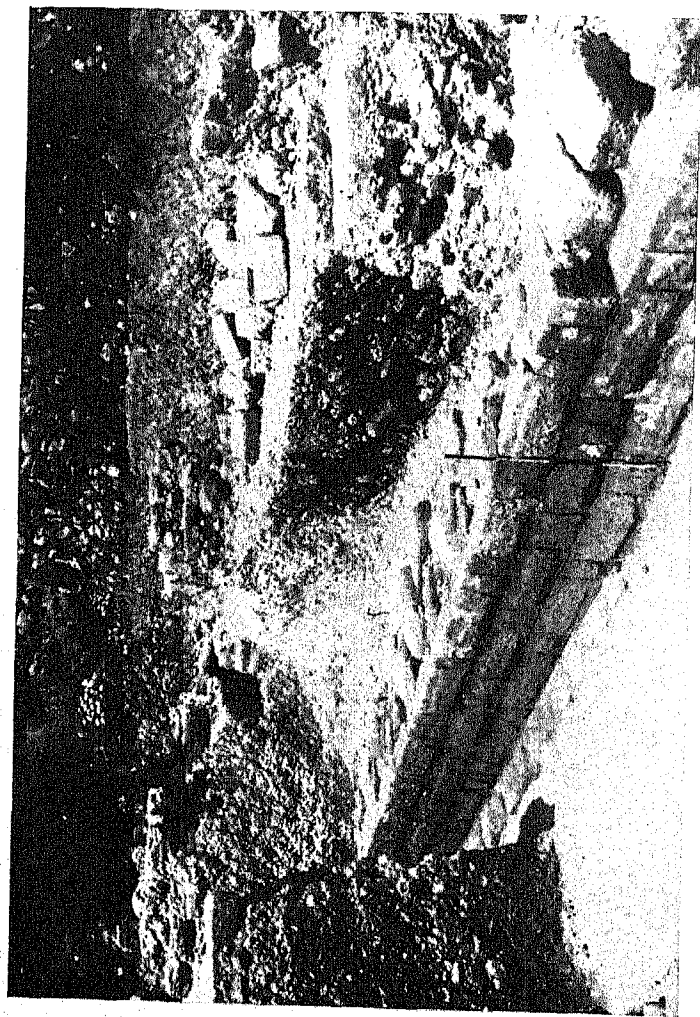
Omri king of Israel (886-874 B.C.),¹ is the first Hebrew king whose name appears on the monuments of antiquity. It was not until after his death that his name was chiselled on the stone of Mesha king of Moab or upon the cuneiform records of Assyria, but the fact of its appearance in this form shows that in Omri's time at last the world was waking up to the importance of the Hebrews.

His reign is very lightly passed over in the Bible (I K. 16²³⁻²⁸), but from the independent records we must assume that the impression he made upon his contemporaries was not small. From this time forward the country of northern Palestine is known to the Assyrians as the 'Land of Omri', or *Humri*,² as the Assyrians spelt his name.

¹ The dates henceforward are those of T. H. Robinson, *History of Israel (Appendix)*. The Assyrian inscriptions are quoted from D. D. Luckenbill's *Ancient Records of Assyria*, vols i, ii (1927).

² The H is a strong guttural, but in common with other recent writers we refrain from the misleading transliteration *Khumri*, *Khammurabi*, *Khatti*, &c.





16. SAMARIA TO-DAY

Recent excavation has revealed the old Israelite city walls and the ivory palace of Ahab.

The chief event of Omri's reign recorded in the Bible is his transference of the capital of Israel from Tirzah to Samaria (I K. 16²⁴).

Excavations in Samaria have been undertaken in recent years, with extremely interesting results. Part of the fortress walls have been discovered, showing the massive work of Omri with the repairs and enlargements added by his successors. The position was one of great natural strength, the face of a steep cliff being terraced to receive the wall-foundations.

Most of the buildings have been effaced by subsequent occupation, but there is a good example of a private house contemporary perhaps with Omri, known as the 'Osorkon House' on account of the cartouche of that Pharaoh (Osorkon II, 879-851 B.C.) which was found in it. The house measures over 43 by 27 feet, being divided into rooms, the walls of about a yard in thickness resting on the rock. Some of the finest architectural remains in Samaria, however, date only from the time of Herod.

The site and much of the plan of Omri's palace has been discovered, resting on the rock. It was designed as a series of open courts with rooms grouped around them, after the style of a Spanish *patio*. In one of the courts a circular shaft has been opened up, leading to an underground chamber of 20 feet by 16 feet and 16 feet high. A secret passage led from this chamber to a room in the palace. The place was full of bones, and at first was thought to have been used as a dungeon or *oubliette*, but expert examination has shown that all the bones were those of animals. Unromantic though it sounds, this underground chamber was probably no more than a larder.

We shall read in the next chapter of Ahab's enlargement of this palace, and of the Ivory House that he built.

Of Omri, as we have said, the Assyrian records preserve nothing beyond the mere mention of his name: indeed, it was not until within a year of his death that the first tentative invasion of the far west was made by Ashur-nazir-apli, king of Assyria (884-860 B.C.), and the conquest of Palestine became a definite objective of Nineveh.

A brief record of this campaign is preserved in the Assyrian inscriptions referring to the year 874 B.C. In these we read that Ashurnazirpal (as he is usually called) marched as far westward as the 'Great Sea of the Land of the Amurru', and received tribute from the kings of the sea coast. Thus the inscription on the threshold of the Temple at Calah runs:

874 B.C.¹ At that time I marched along the side of Mount Lebanon, and to the Great Sea of the land of Amurru I went up. In the Great Sea I washed my weapons, and I made offerings unto the gods. The tribute of the kings of the sea coast, of Tyre, Sidon, Gebal (Byblos), . . . Amurru, and Arvad, which lies in the midst of the sea—silver, gold . . . and a dolphin (sea-horse), a creature of the sea, I received as tribute from them, and they embraced my feet. (L. i. 479.)

Such is the brief and colourless, but infinitely significant record, which commemorates the beginning of the Assyrian period in Hebrew history.

But it was not till twenty years later that Assyria became a real menace to Palestine. The 'Kings of the Hittites' around Carchemish, Hamath, and the Lebanons provided a buffer state which had first to be mastered; and after them it was necessary to reduce Syria (Damascus) before Israel could be attacked with the Assyrian flank secure.

¹ The dates at the head of each inscription refer, not to the writing of the record, but to the events which it describes.

AHAB SON OF OMRI

It was some time before Syria and Israel perceived the expediency of joining forces against the distant foe, but at last they did so after the Battle of Aphek about 854 B.C. (I K. 20³⁴). The alliance was almost immediately faced with a second Assyrian invasion, that of Shalmanezar III, which, though not mentioned at all in the Biblical narrative, is recorded for us in the earliest cuneiform inscription which explicitly makes contact with Hebrew history.

The cuneiform record describing the Assyrian victory of the Battle of Karkar—on **Shalmanezar's Monolith Inscription**—includes an important reference to Ahab king of Israel:

853 B.C. Karkar, his royal city, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire. 1,200 chariots, 1,200 cavalry, 20,000 soldiers of Hadad-ezer¹ of Damascus (= Ben-hadad): . . . 2,000 chariots, 10,000 soldiers of Ahab the Israelite . . . thousands of soldiers of Baasa son of Ruhubi the Ammonite . . . (the twelve kings he brought to his support) I defeated. I rained destruction upon them. I scattered their corpses far and wide . . . the plain was too small to let their bodies fall . . . with their bodies I spanned the Orontes as with a bridge. (L. i. 611.)

'Such is the typically bloodthirsty account which the Assyrians give of their first recorded contact with the Jews,' observes Pinches.² It is more than that: it is the first quite certain mention of any Hebrew monarch, or indeed of any Biblical character outside the Bible.

It is startling to realize that not until now, not until the

¹ *Hadad-ezer*—(Bin)-Addu-Idri = Ben-hadad ; *Damascus*—Shaimrishu (Syria); *Ahab*—Ahhabu; *Israelite*—Sirilite (the sole appearance of the name Israel in cuneiform).

² T. G. Pinches, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (1902), a useful book, if the dates are adjusted.

middle of the ninth century, when the most glorious period of her history is already overpast, does Israel appear in the pages of world history: and that the first King of the Jews to have his name so recorded should be, not the warrior David, nor the wise Solomon, but Ahab, the most detested name of all.

Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house that he built . . . are they not written? (I K. 22³⁹).

Every one has been struck by the sumptuous picture which these words call up, but only recently have the excavations given tangible evidence of their truth. From these it appears that Ahab preserved but greatly enlarged the palace built by his father, especially by the addition of a tremendously heavy double wall completely encircling it, and by the erection of a massive royal treasury which by its great size and elaborate system of store-chambers evinces the prosperity of Samaria under his rule.

Hitherto most people thought that ivory here was only a figure of speech, referring perhaps to the dazzling whiteness of the masonry: but that the palace and its furnishings were really of ivory, or at least of ivory inlay, is proved by the recent (1933) discoveries of Crowfoot. The city was destroyed, with all its fragile beauty, by the Assyrians in 722 B.C., but 'by amazing good fortune, some ivories had entirely escaped the fire and were found embedded in the clay floor, sufficiently well preserved to reveal the beauty of their carved work'. Many of the ivory pieces bear marks showing that they had been inlaid over other substances, 'decorating the panels or framework of furniture, and let in to the wainscotting of the walls'.

The ivories show a strong Egyptian influence. There are figures of a hawk-headed Horus, of Isis with her lotus-flower,

of Thoth with his ibis beak, sacred Horus Eyes, and so on. There is also a beautiful winged sphinx or cherub, with the body of a lion, the crowned head of a man, standing in a thicket of lotus flowers. By far the most popular pattern was the 'drooping palm' in pierced ivory-work set in rows and apparently intended for a frieze round the room.

The luxury and wealth of Samaria may be gauged from the fact that much of this exquisite ivory work had evidently been covered with gold leaf (as when Solomon's throne of ivory was 'overlaid with best gold'), an excess of sumptuousness which might well provoke the denunciation of the Prophet, Woe unto the people of Samaria who *lie upon beds of ivory and stretch themselves upon their couches* (Amos 6⁴). A bed of ivory, with solid chased ivory legs and beautiful carving, has actually been found at Arslan-Tash in north Syria. 'One remarkable thing about this ivory work is the artist's passion for minute carving. There are such tiny scales on the ivory wings of the goddesses, such minute glass insets to be inlaid into them—I sometimes wonder if all this delicate work did not adorn the queen's room in the palace, rather than the king's, perhaps to delight a little princess, like her of whom the Psalmist sings: "All thy garments smell of ivory and cassia, out of the ivory palaces whereby they have made thee glad."'¹

THE MOABITE STONE

We now come to a monument which has the unique importance of being the only royal inscription written in Hebrew yet discovered, namely, the so-called **Moabite Stone**, or Stone of Mesha.

This famous monument was found in 1868 by the C.M.S.

¹ Grace Crowfoot, Article in *Bible Lands* (Oct. 1933).

missionary F. A. Klein, on the site of Dibon. The over-eager interest of Europeans caused the Arabs to destroy the stone by making a fire below it, and dashing cold water over it when heated, so cracking it to pieces. Fortunately, skilful rubbings and squeezes had previously been taken, with the help of which the fragments were pieced together, so that the stone now stands apparently intact in the Louvre. There is also a facsimile in the British Museum.

The stone is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in height, 2 feet wide, and 2 feet thick. It is written in the Phoenician script which was used also by the Hebrews of this period, and the language differs only a little from Biblical Hebrew.

The historical situation underlying the stone seems to have been as follows: Omri had triumphed over Moab for 'many days' before his death, and Ahab had inherited the tribute payable by Moab (II K. 3⁴). The supremacy of Israel lasted until half-way through the reign of Ahab, that is till about 863 B.C. (the 'forty years' of the stone must have been an exaggeration), when Mesha protested and won some success. On Ahab's death the Moabite rebellion came to a head, and his son Jehoram marched from Samaria to suppress it (II K. 3⁵). At first Israel in alliance with Jehoshaphat of Judah won a victory at the Battle of the Blood-red Water (II K. 3²²), but eventually Mesha sacrificed his eldest son upon the wall, and defeated the Hebrew alliance, so that *they departed from Mesha and returned to their own land* (II K. 3²⁷).

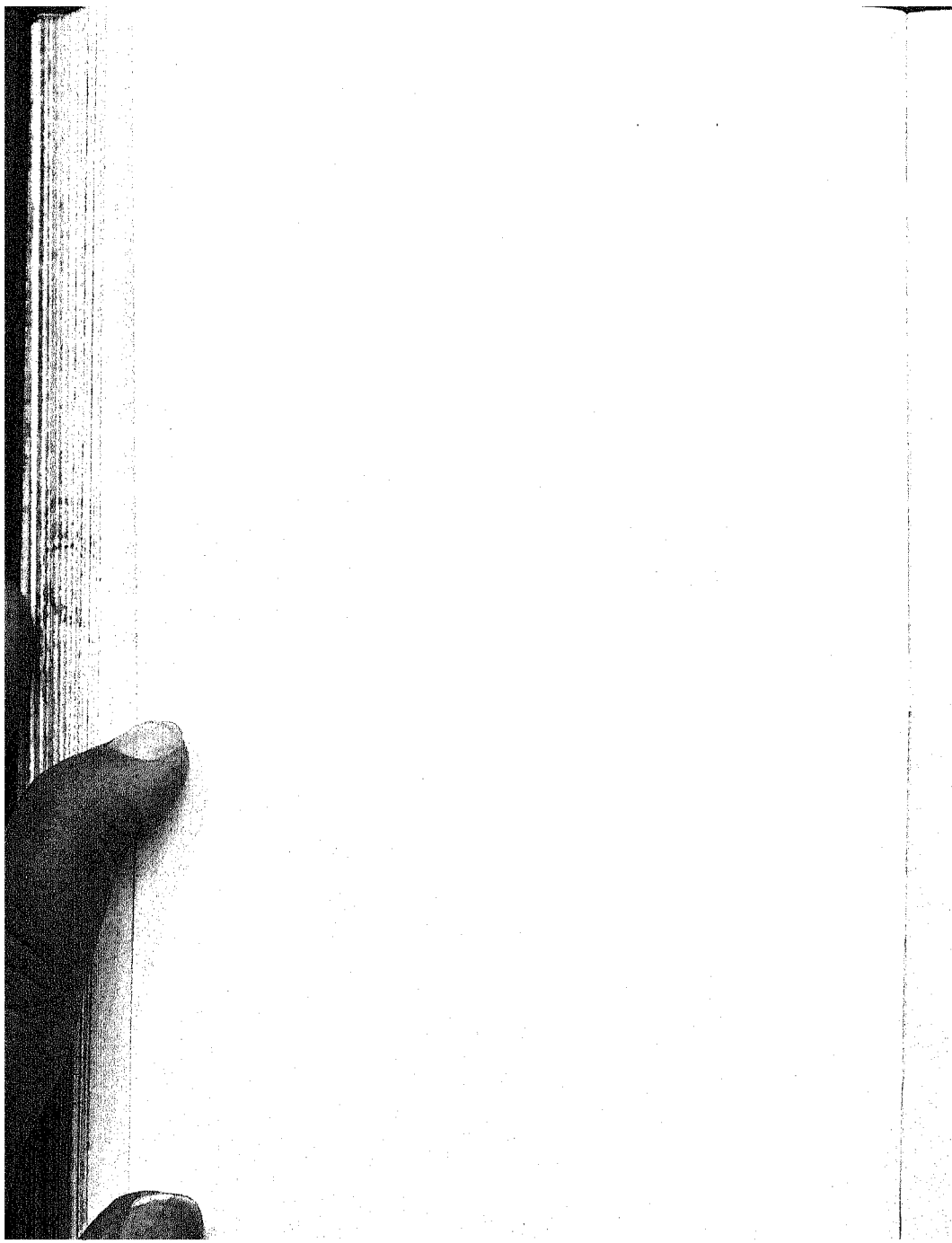
It is to this last Moabite victory that the stone refers at greatest length. The record itself we may suppose to have been written about 847 B.C., soon after the Battle of Karkar.

The following passages have been extracted from a literal translation of the stone:



17. THE MOABITE STONE

As reconstructed after it had been deliberately broken by the Arabs. A replica may be seen in the British Museum. This is the oldest Hebrew inscription of any length in existence, about 850 B.C.



1. I am Mesha, son of Chemosh-Khan, King of Moab, the Dibonite.
2. My father reigned over Moab thirty years, and I reigned after my father.
3. And I made this High Place for Chemosh in Kir-haresheth,
4. For he had saved me from all my foes. . . .
5. Omri was King of Israel, and he afflicted Moab many days, for Chemosh was angry with Moab.
6. And his son (i.e. *Ahab*) succeeded him, and he too said, 'I will afflict Moab.' In my days he said it.
7. And I looked upon (i.e. *defeated*) him and upon his House: and Israel perished everlastingly.
8. And Omri possessed the land of Medeba. And Israel dwelt therein, his days and half the days of his son, forty years.
9. And Chemosh restored it in my days. . . .
10. Now the men of Gad had dwelt in the land of Ghatarot from of old: and the King of Israel built for himself Ghatarot.
11. And I fought against the city and I took it. And I slew all the people of the city,
12. A gazing stock for Chemosh and for Moab. And I captured from thence the ariel¹ (i.e. *shrine*) of the god,
13. And I dragged it before Chemosh in Cherioth. . . .
14. And Chemosh said unto me, 'Go, seize Nebo against Israel.'
15. And I went by night, and fought against it from dawn unto noon.
16. And I seized it, and slew all of it. . . .
17. For to Chemosh I had devoted it.
18. And I took from thence the Vessels of Jehovah,² and dragged them before Chemosh.

Mesha—*Mesha*; Moab—*Moab*; Dibonite—*Da-ibonite*; Chemosh—*Kemosh*; Kir-haresheth—*Kerekhah*; Omri—*Omri*; Israel—*Israel*; Medeba—*Mehedeba*; Cherioth—*Keriyot*.

¹ It is interesting to find that Jehovah at this date had His sacred cult-object which, like the effigies of foreign gods, could be carried off.

² Jehovah—*Yahweh* = the earliest indubitable mention of the Divine Name outside the Bible.

19. Now the King of Israel had built Yahash, and dwelt therein while he fought against me. And Chemosh drove him away from before me.

20. And I took from Moab two hundred men, and I brought them up against Yahash,

21. And seized it to add unto Dibon. . . .

24. Now cisterns there were none in the middle of the city of Kir-haresesh. And I said unto the people,

25. 'Make you every man a cistern in his house.'

26. And I cut the watercourse for Kir-harasesh by means of prisoners captured from Israel.

27. I built Aroer and I made the high road by the river Arnon. . . .

29. And I ruled over one hundred [princes] in the cities which I had added to the land. . . .

Thus the evidence of this contemporary monument both confirms and supplements the Biblical narrative. Both sides have passed lightly over their losses, and magnified their success. The Israelite invasion is admitted on the stone by its reference to the lack of cisterns in the city, with which compare the Biblical note *they stopped all the fountains of waters* (II K. 3²⁶). On the other hand the Moabite success is conceded by the Biblical writer not only in the words *there was great wrath against Israel* (II K. 3²⁷), but in the reference to a time shortly afterwards when *the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year* (II K. 13²⁰).

XII

THE ASSYRIAN ADVANCE

THIS chapter covers the Assyrian campaigns against Damascus and Samaria, ending with the destruction of the latter in 722 B.C. It is the tumultuous period of the fall of the Houses of Omri and Ben-hadad, of Jezebel trampled beneath Jehu's horse, of Elisha's ruthless suppression of the cult of Baal, of Amos¹ and Hosea hurling spoken and written thunderbolts against the godless luxury of Israel; and it is a period where the vivid Biblical narrative is exceptionally well supplemented, on its political side, by the inscriptions.

The Assyrian records now assume the proportions of a voluminous literature, filling two large volumes in Luckenbill's *Ancient Records of Assyria*, many of which fall within the years covered by this chapter. From these we shall select quotations bearing upon Biblical history, omitting only those which merely repeat in almost identical terms the information given in collateral inscriptions.²

In the middle of the ninth century, then, the political situation (so far as our present purpose is concerned) was this: after the Battle of Karkar (853 B.C.), in which, as we have seen,³ the Ahab-Ben-hadad confederacy had been worsted,

¹ The Book of Amos, probably the earliest prophetic book to be written down, is believed to date from about 750 B.C.

² Many of the inscriptions are repeated and copied in the same stereotyped form, or with the insertion of only a word or two of additional information. We would remind the reader again that the dates appended are those of the events which the text describes, and not of the inscription itself. Dots (...) mean omitted by the present writer: asterisks (***) mean illegible in the original inscription.

³ See above, p. 133.

Shalmanezer III returned to press home his victory in the years 849 and 848 B.C. The cuneiform record reads as follows:

848 B.C. In my eleventh year of reign, I crossed the Euphrates for the ninth time. . . . Against the cities of the land of Hamath I descended . . . Hadad-ezer (= Ben-hadad) of Damascus and twelve kings of the land of the Hittites who stood by each other, I defeated them. (L. i. 568.)

If the twelve kings included, as in the Monolith Inscription, the king of Israel among them, then the reference here must be to Ahab's son Jehoram.

Shalmanezer's success evidently stopped short of the complete subjugation of Syria, for Ben-hadad was slain a few years later (842 B.C.), not by the Assyrian, but by his servant Hazael, who thus became king in Damascus. This is recorded both in the Bible (II K. 8^{7ff.}) and in Shalmanezer's **Statue Inscription** from Assur, where we read:

842 B.C. Hadad-ezer died. Hazael, the son of a nobody, seized the throne. (L. i. 681.)

About the same time Jehu, having shot his royal master Jehoram, made himself king of Israel (II K. 9²⁴), and proceeded to exterminate the whole of the House of Omri as far as he could (II K. 10). Of the Assyrian ignorance concerning Jehu's lack of hereditary title to the throne, we have a quaint proof in the inscriptions, where he is uniformly described as 'Jehu son of Omri' (cf. L. i. 590, 672).

It is at this point that we introduce the highly important inscription on the **Black Obelisk** of Shalmanezer III. This celebrated monument, now in the British Museum, was discovered by Layard at Calah in 1845, and deciphered by



18. THE BLACK OBELISK

A stele of Shalmanezzer III now in the British Museum, reporting the homage paid to Assyria by Jehu king of Israel and others in 841 B.C. Jehu is the kneeling figure in the second row.

Rawlinson¹ five years later, being the first Assyrian inscription of any length to yield its secret to the new study of Assyriology.² A beautifully executed pictorial representation in relief of the successes of Shalmanezar, it gives a full record of the first thirty years of his reign in chronological order, adding brief captions to the portraits.

The Black Obelisk is the more important, because it fills a distinct gap in the Biblical narrative, showing how the Hazael-Jehu confederacy was at once attacked by the Assyrian with disastrous results to Syria and Israel.³ The pertinent lines of the inscription run:

841 B.C. In my 18th year of reign I crossed the Euphrates for the 16th time. Hazael of Damascus came forth to battle. 1,121 of his chariots, 470 of his cavalry, together with his camp I captured from him. (L. i. 575.)

A caption of the greatest interest to Biblical students, explaining one of the portraits, runs:

841 B.C. The tribute of Jehu son of Omri. Silver, gold, a golden bowl, a golden beaker, golden goblets, pitchers of gold, lead, sceptres for the hand of the king, javelins I received from him. (L. i. 590.)

This sculptured relief of the prostrate Jehu is the only picture⁴ of a Hebrew monarch so far discovered.

A longer record of this campaign, discovered at Calah, adds the following details:

841 B.C. Hazael of Syria trusted in the mass of his troops, mustered his armies in great numbers, made Mount Sanir a peak

¹ It was Hincks, however, an Irish clergyman, who first recognized the name Jehu under the syllables *Ya-u-a*, in 1851.

² Assyriology includes, of course, the study of Babylonian antiquities.

³ Hazael—*Haza-ilu*; Syria—*Imerishu*; Jehu—*Yaua*.

⁴ It may be readily identified on the obelisk by the dark smudge underneath it, caused by the index-finger of three generations of museum guides.

of the Lebanons his stronghold . . . I defeated him . . . To save his life he went up into the mountains. I followed after him. In Damascus his royal city I shut him up. His orchards I cut down. I advanced as far as Mount Hauran. Countless cities I destroyed. . . . At that time I received the tribute of the men of Tyre, Sidon, and of Jehu son of Omri. (L. i. 672.)

The Black Obelisk also mentions a further campaign against Hazael (who evidently did save his life) three years later:

838 B.C. In my 21st year of reign I crossed the Euphrates for the 21st time. I advanced against the cities of Hazael of Damascus. Four of his cities I captured. The gifts of the Tyrians, Sidonians, and Gebalites I received. (L. i. 578.)

Rebellions at home, however, prevented Shalmanezar from completing the subjection of Damascus. We hear no more of Assyrian intervention for nearly forty years, during which Hazael took advantage of the opportunity for harrying Israel again (II K. 10³²), and Ben-hadad III reduced Jehoahaz to a shameful subserviency (II K. 13⁷).

Shalmanezar's successor Shamshi-Addu III left Syria alone, but his grandson Adad-Nirari III¹ (805-782 B.C.) records an invasion of the west in the first year of his reign:

805 B.C. I conquered the lands of the Hittite, Amurru entirely, Tyre, Sidon, the Land of Omri (= Israel, now under King Jehoahaz), Edom, Palastu (= Philistia) up to the Great Sea of the Setting Sun. . . . Against Syria I marched, Mariu² King of Syria in Damascus his royal city I shut up. The terrifying splendour of Assur my Lord overwhelmed him, and he laid hold of my feet, and became my vassal. . . . (L. i. 740.)

This inscription explains how it was that Jehoash of Israel was able to defeat the harassed Syrians, as prophesied by

¹ Adad-Nirari—in older books called Ramman-Nirari.

² Mariu is apparently Ben-hadad III.

Elisha (II K. 13¹⁴⁻²⁵). It has even been suggested that Adad-Nirari was the *saviour* who brought Israel *from under the hand of the Syrians*, mentioned in II Kings 13⁵.

That the Assyrian victories over Damascus were followed up in the ensuing years is shown by the Eponym or Limmu Lists. The relevant entries are as follows:

773 B.C. (Shalmanezer IV)	Against Damascus.
772 B.C. ,,	Against Hatarika (Hadrach).
765 B.C. (Ashurdan III)	Against Hatarika.
,,	A Plague.
763 B.C. ,,	In the month of Simanu an Eclipse of the Sun. (L. ii. 1198.)

These bald entries are of special interest for us, since they help to explain Israel's rapid rise to prosperity under Jeroboam II, and may well throw light on allusions in the prophet Amos, such as the Assyrian attack on Damascus (Amos 6¹⁴, &c.), the pestilence (Amos 4¹⁰), and the eclipse which was almost certainly in the prophet's mind when he wrote *I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day* (Amos 8⁹).

TIGLATH-PILESER—PUL

A lull of some thirty years seems to have followed Ashur-dan's invasion of the west (in 765 B.C.), but the accession of Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul) marked a notable revival of Assyrian ambition. Henceforth the policy of Nineveh aims relentlessly at the utter destruction of her troublesome neighbours in the west, and we hear for the first time of those wholesale deportations which became so characteristic of the Assyrian and Babylonian conquerors.

When Tiglath-Pileser marched westward in 738 B.C., the political situation was as follows: Israel under Menahem,

the prosperous days of Jeroboam II now far behind, was once more fraternizing with Rezin king of Syria, and hoping to induce Judah to join in a north-Palestinian alliance against the menace from the east. To nip this troublesome growth in the bud Tiglath-Pileser¹ attacked in force:

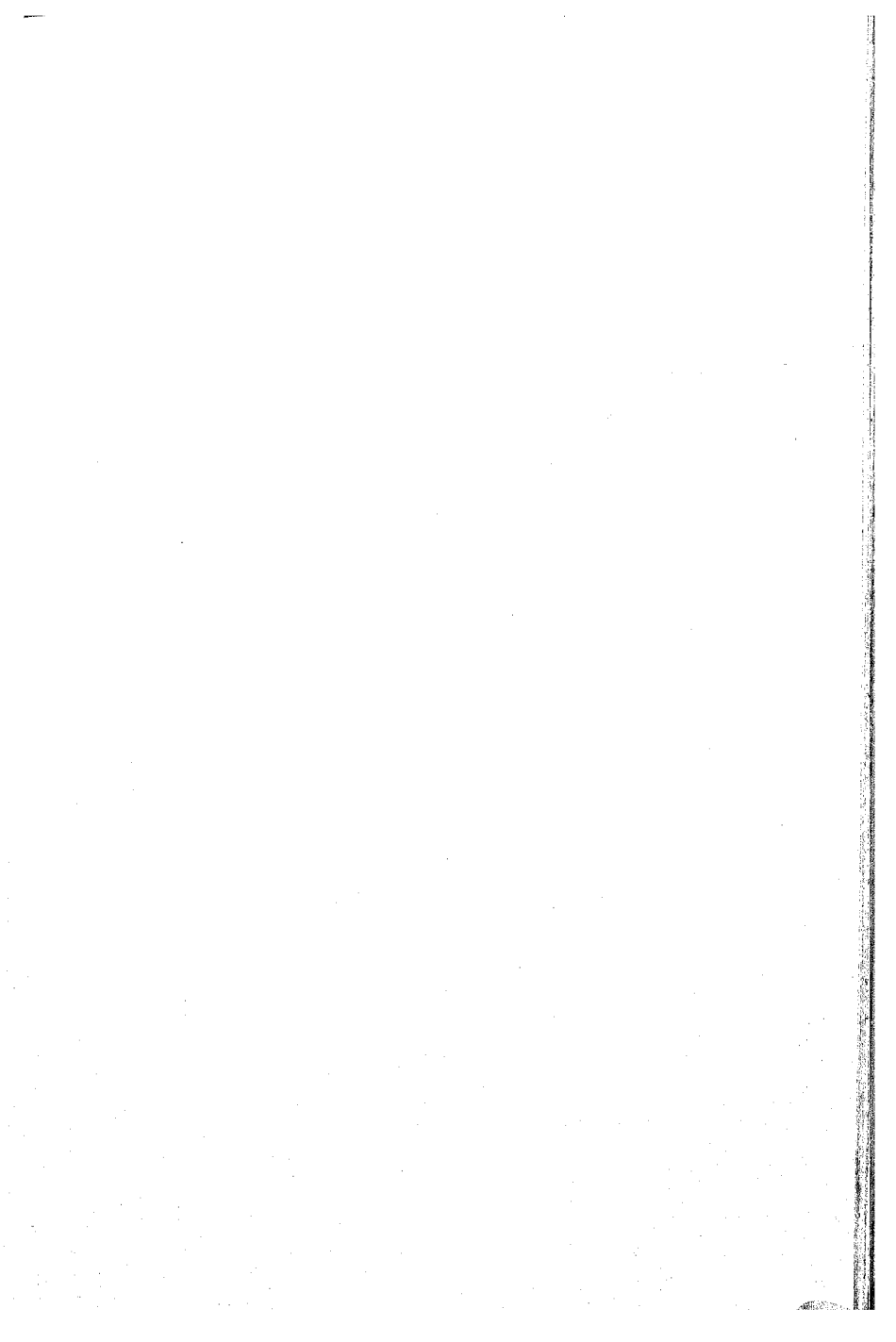
738 B.C. In the course of my campaign, I received the tribute of the kings of the Sea Coast . . . Azariah, the land of Ya-u-di, . . . I destroyed, I devastated, I burnt with fire [the cities] which had gone over to Azariah, and had strengthened him . . . like pots I smashed them, tribute I laid upon them . . . together with the cities up to Mount Saue, a peak of the Lebanons, Mount Baal-Zephon, . . . 19 districts of Hamath, together with the cities of their environs, which lie on the shore of the Sea of the Setting Sun, which had gone over to Azariah in revolt and contempt of Assyria, I brought within the borders of Assyria. My officials I set over them as governors. 30,300 people I carried off from their cities and placed them in the province of the city of K— [Kir?]. (L. i. 770.)

The inscription, somewhat mutilated, goes on to speak of kings of Syria and the district who secured immunity by the prompt payment of tribute, among whom are mentioned 'Rezin' of Syria and Menahem of Samaria' (L. i. 772).

The occasion referred to in the foregoing records is evidently that described in II Kings 15¹⁹, where we are told that *there came against the land Pul the king of Assyria; and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver. . . . So the king of Assyria turned back.*

There is now no doubt about the identity of Pul with Tiglath-Pileser (in spite of I Chron. 5²⁶), for many inscriptions have been found where the names are used alternatively: Pulu being the real name of an usurper who adopted the more famous title of one of the first great Assyrian kings.

¹ Tiglath-Pileser (Pul)—*Tukulti-apil-esharra (Pulu)*; Rezin—*Razunnu*.





19. TIGLATH-PILESER (PUL)

The Assyrian king driving in his chariot of state, with driver, and attendant holding sunshade.
From a frieze in the royal palace at Nimrud. Date about 740 B.C.

The identification of 'Azariah of Yaudi' on the inscription is not, however, so certain. Some, like Luckenbill and Hall, would read it as 'Azariah king of Judah'. But there is nothing save the name to connect the two: Azariah of Judah (if our chronology is correct) died in the first year of Pul (745 B.C.),¹ and in any case we have no reason to believe he would have been involved in an alliance with so distant a country as Hamath, still less that he would have been the pivot of such an alliance as the inscription suggests. Robinson is therefore probably correct in attributing this Azariah to a far northern state of Jaudi, which had nothing to do with Judah.

We now reach the days so vividly portrayed in the Scriptures when those *two tails of smoking firebrands* Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel tried to compel Ahaz of Judah to combine with them against Assyria, and Isaiah bade him fear them not (Is. 7⁴). Ahaz did indeed resist the Syro-Ephraimite overtures, but foolishly bribed Tiglath-Pileser to do just what he had intended to do in any case (II K. 16⁷); and swiftly the Assyrian struck.

Of the gratuitous submission of Ahaz to Nineveh we have no record in the inscriptions save the bare mention of Jeho-Ahaz² king of Judah amongst her tributaries. But the form of the name is interesting: why did the Biblical writers omit the *Jeho*—(Jehovah) from his name? 'Possibly his reputation for unprecedented wickedness led the Jewish scribes to eliminate the divine element from his name', is Robinson's suggestion.

As to the defeat of Rezin and the final destruction of Damascus, we are fortunate in possessing a full and vigorous description by Tiglath-Pileser himself.

¹ See Appendix III, 'Chronological Table of the Assyrian Period'.

² Jeho-Ahaz—*Yau-hazi* (L. i. 801).

734 B.C. That one [viz. Rezon of Damascus] fled alone to save his life *** and like a mouse he entered the gate of his city. His nobles I captured alive with my own hands, and hanged them on stakes and let his land gaze on them. 45 soldiers of my camp *** I selected, and like a bird in a cage I shut him up. His gardens and *** plantations without number I cut down, not one escaped *** (L. i. 776.)

Hadaru the house of the father of Rezon of Syria where he was born, I besieged, I captured . . . captives I carried off. 16 districts of Syria I destroyed like mounds left by a flood. (L. i. 777.)

Such is the contemporary Assyrian account of how *the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin* (II K. 16⁹).

Northern Israel, as was to be expected, also suffered (II K. 15²⁹), though we have little evidence of this in the inscriptions beyond a fragment referring to Naphtali:

734 B.C. *** on the border of the Land of Omri [viz. Israel] . . . the wide land of Naphtali in its entirety, I brought within the border of Assyria. My official (*tartan*) I set over them as governor. Hanno of Gaza fled before my weapons. (L. i. 815.)

About this time we are told that *Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah* (King of Israel), *and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead* (II K. 15³⁰). Of this, too, we have the evidence of the inscriptions:

733 B.C. The Land of Omri *** all its people together with their goods I carried off to Assyria. Pekah¹ their king they deposed, and I placed Hoshea¹ over them as king. 10 talents of gold, 10 talents of silver, as their tribute I received from them, and to Assyria I carried them. (L. i. 816.)

Thus ended the completely successful campaign which

¹ Pekah—*Pakaha*; Hoshea—*Ausia*.

destroyed Damascus, and reduced the rest of north Syria to submission. There is no record that Tiglath-Pileser ever went west again.

THE FALL OF SAMARIA

When Shalmanezzer V succeeded Tiglath-Pileser in 727 B.C., the whole empire (as was usual on a change of sovereigns) quivered with insurrection. Hoshea of Israel himself shared in the general disaffection, and began to intrigue with *So king of Egypt*, even going so far as to refuse his annual tribute to Nineveh (II K. 17⁴).

This *So king of Egypt* is almost certainly to be identified with the Sibe of the inscriptions of the next reign, that is to say with Sabaco or Shabaka,¹ founder of the XXVth Egyptian Dynasty. At the time of which we are now speaking, namely, about 724 B.C., he was not yet, as a matter of fact, king of Egypt: we shall see that the inscriptions of 720 B.C. still speak of him as *tartan* of Egypt. But the anticipatory use of the royal title by the Biblical writer is easily understandable, especially as he was the natural heir of the reigning Pharaoh, Piankhi I.

As usual, however, the expected reinforcement from Egypt failed to materialize, and Shalmanezzer, advancing rapidly upon the rebellious king of Israel, captured him almost at once (II K. 17⁴).

But of Shalmanezzer's campaign in the west we have practically no inscriptional evidence at all.

Whoever began the three years' siege of Samaria, it is certain from the inscriptions that not Shalmanezzer V but his

¹ Saba-ka: the -ka is simply the Ethiopic article. (So Brugsch. Peet, however, questions this, and refuses the identification. See E. T. Peet, *Egypt and the Old Testament*, p. 171.)

successor Sargon¹ effected its final capture, and is therefore the king of Assyria intended in II Kings 17⁶.

The discovery of this important sovereign is one of the major results of Biblical archaeology. 'Strange as it may seem, until the discovery of the Assyrian inscriptions, and their decipherment, nothing was known of Sargon outside of the Old Testament, where his name was regarded as an alternative for Shalmanezar in the only passage where it occurs—Isaiah 20¹' (Pinches). He became king of Assyria at the end of 722 B.C. or the beginning of 721.

Sargon records his first (Syrian) campaign in many of his very numerous inscriptions, but the capture of Samaria is evidently counted as only a minor triumph, and none of the further inscriptions add anything to his own 'authorized version' on the walls of the royal palace at Dur-Sarraku (Khorsabad), which runs as follows:

722 B.C. In my first year of reign *** the people of Samaria *** to the number of 27,290 . . . I carried away. 50 chariots for my royal equipment I selected. The city I rebuilt. I made it greater than it was before. People of the lands I had conquered I settled therein. My official (*tartan*) I placed over them as governor. (L. ii. 4.)

Thus briefly and unimaginatively the Assyrian records his subjugation of one of the most notable cities in history. To him the kingdom of Israel was but one of a hundred petty outlying states, and its royal capital but one of a thousand unimportant towns to be squeezed of all possible spoil and then crushed under foot. There is nothing whatever in all the inscriptions of the ancient East to show that any of Israel's conquerors appreciated in the smallest degree her unique religious, literary, or cultural contribution to the

¹ Sargon—*Sharraaku*.

world. Their judgements, for any evidence we possess to the contrary, were utterly and almost inconceivably materialistic and barbarous. To them Samaria and Jerusalem itself were never more than troublesome fortresses which stood in the way of the spoliation of the surrounding villages and farms.

But to the Jews themselves, the Fall of Samaria was the work not of Sargon, whose name they disdained even to record, but of the Providence of Jehovah, a dreadful warning of the inevitable effect of apostasy and evil deeds. *And it was so, because the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God* (II K. 17⁷).

No more reference is made in the Assyrian inscriptions to Samaria, except as a province of the empire. An allusion to the planting of Mesopotamian colonists in the ravaged country may be discerned in a statement of Sargon that he transported some of the inhabitants of Babylon itself to the 'Land of the Hittites'.¹ Yet it is strange to find that, even after its subjection, Samaria was still able to cause trouble within a year or two, as we shall see.²

Having secured his communications by the elimination of Samaria, Sargon had no difficulty in reducing piecemeal the coalition of north and south which had, perhaps, arranged to join forces in Israel. A rapid march southwards brought him face to face with the dilatory So king of Egypt and his ally, Hanno of Gaza, whom he utterly defeated at the Battle of Raphia (720 B.C.), as he thus records on his Display Inscription from Khorsabad, now in the India House.

720 B.C. Hanno king of Gaza with Sibe *tartan* of Egypt, who had come out against me at Raphia to offer battle, I defeated. Sibe

¹ There are many references to the transportation to Palestine of peoples from other districts conquered by the Assyrians. ² See below, p. 150.

became frightened at the clangour of my weapons and fled, to be seen no more. Hanno king of Gaza I seized with my own hand. The tribute of Pharaoh king of Egypt, Samsi queen of Arabia, &c., I received. (L. ii. 55.)

Sargon then turned northward, and came upon the other section of the allied army under the king of Hamath at Karkar, his royal city, where the confederates of Ahab had been so signally defeated by Assyria over a century before.¹

In his inscriptions recording the Assyrian victory of the second Battle of Karkar (720 B.C.), Sargon mentions one 'Jeho-bidi² of Hamath, a camp-follower, with no claim to the throne, an evil Hittite', who had stirred up revolt in the cities of northern Syria. Amongst these rebels are named, somewhat strangely, Damascus and Samaria (L. ii. 55).

Since both these cities had been suppressed, we must assume that either (1) the Assyrian governors of the dismantled sites had failed to quell native disaffection—in which case the Assyrian policy of wholesale deportations is explained; or else (2) that Jeho-bidi's confederates included refugees from Damascus and Samaria, as Robinson suggests. Could the upstart Jeho-bidi himself have been a Samaritan?

Sargon thus striking north and south consolidated his victories in Syria, colonized the depopulated areas with aliens, and added a new province to the Assyrian empire. Only one small portion of Palestine now remained unsubdued: the sole obstacle between Assyria and the much-desired conquest of Egypt was the tiny yet formidable highland state of Judah. But by one of history's strangest ironies, it was not Jerusalem which crumbled first, but Nineveh.

¹ By Shalmanezar III in 853 B.C. See above, p. 133.

² Jeho-bidi—*Yau-bidi*.

XIII

SENNACHERIB'S INVASION

THE period covered in this chapter is roughly the reign of Hezekiah king of Judah, including especially the famous attack on Jerusalem by Sennacherib in 701 B.C. of which we have a parallel account of unexampled vigour and detail both in the Scriptures and in the contemporary records.

That the fall of the Northern Kingdom made a deep impression on Jerusalem is shown by the reforms of Hezekiah and the increased influence of the prophetic schools in diplomatic affairs. For a time Isaiah completely controlled the policy of his king, seeing clearly that the real issue was between Assyria and Egypt, and that Judah's only hope of avoiding the upper and the nether millstone lay in consistent neutrality. There were others, however, who still hankered after an alliance with perfidious Egypt, and jumped at every seeming opportunity of revolt.

REVOLT AGAINST SARGON

The revolt of Ashdod was typical of such futile uprisings. After ten years of punctual payment, Azuri king of Ashdod withheld his tribute from Sargon, and attempted to involve Hezekiah of Judah in the rebellion against Assyria. We are not told of this in the Bible, but it is clear enough from the inscriptions:

711 B.C. Azuri king of Ashdod plotted in his heart to withhold his tribute, and sent messages of hostility to the kings round about him. (L. ii. 30.)

To the kings of Philistia, Judah, Edom, Moab, who dwelt by the sea, payers of tribute to Assyria, he sent numberless

inflammatory messages . . . to set them at enmity with me. To Pharaoh king of Egypt, a prince who could not save them, they sent presents . . . to gain him as an ally. (L. ii. 195.)

The ensuing Assyrian punitive expedition is mentioned by Isaiah¹ very briefly: *the year that tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria fought against Ashdod and took it* (Is. 20¹). It is described in greater detail in the great Khorsabad Inscription (among others) and also in the celebrated Cylinder of Sargon discovered in Ashurbanipal's library at Nineveh. The latter runs as follows:

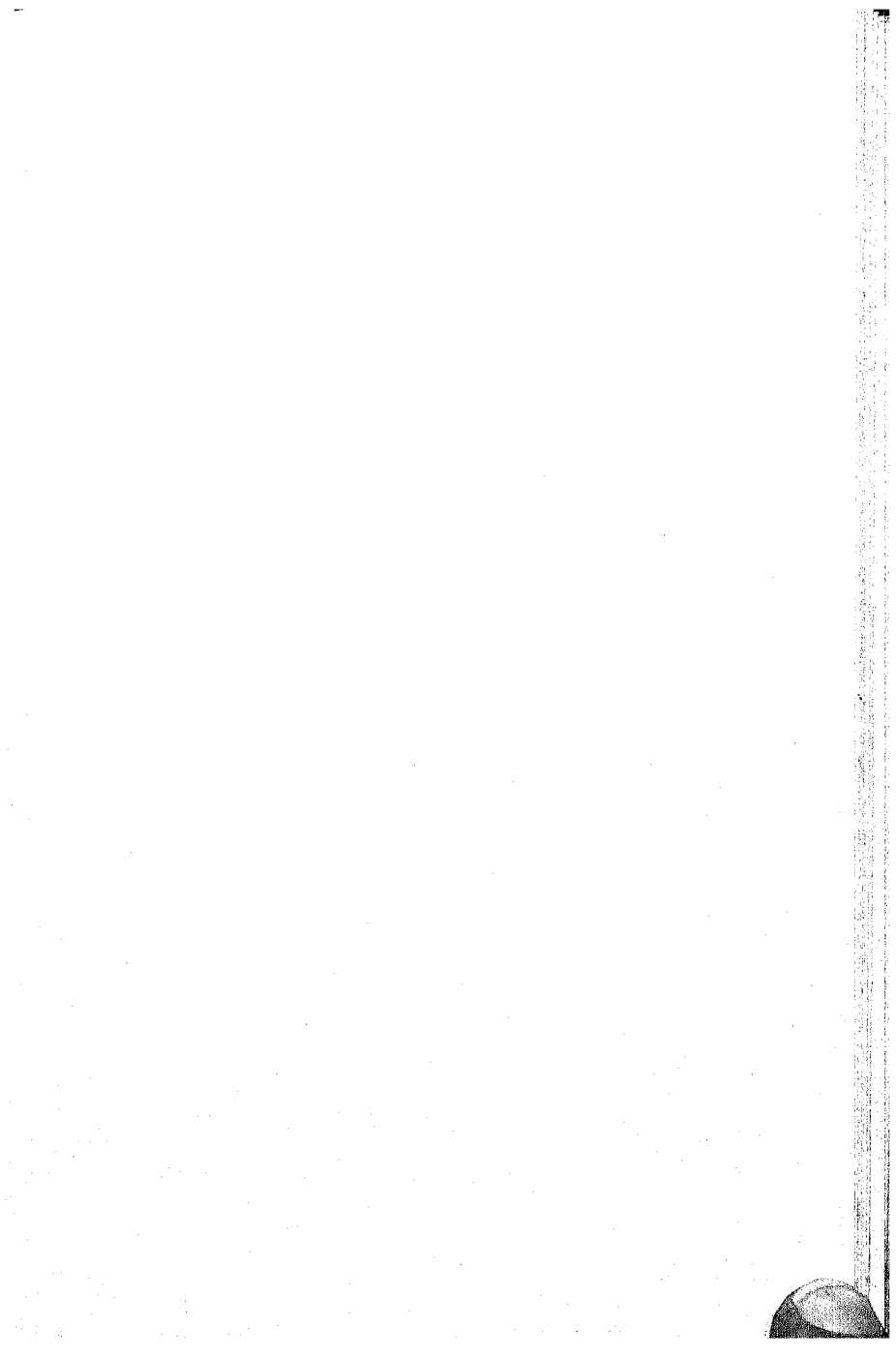
711 B.C. Because of the evil Azuri had done, I put an end to his rule over the people of his land, and set up Ahimitu his full brother as king over them. The Hittites, plotters of iniquity, detested his rule and elevated to the kingship over them an Ionian,² who had no claim to the throne, and who had no more respect for authority than they themselves.

In the anger of my heart, with my war chariot and my horsemen who never depart from my side in any dangerous region, against Ashdod his royal city I advanced in haste. Ashdod, Gath, and Asdudimmu I besieged, I captured. The gods dwelling therein, himself, together with the people of his land, . . . I counted as spoil. Their cities I built anew and settled therein the people of the lands my hands had conquered. My *tartan* I set over them as governor. I counted them with the people of Assyria, and they drew my yoke. (L. ii. 30.)

Thus ignominiously ended the ill-considered revolt of Philistia. Since Judah remained unpunished, we may conclude that Hezekiah was wise enough to resist the 'inflammatory messages' sent him by Azuri: and we may be sure that the lesson of Ashdod upheld the warnings of Isaiah

¹ And we may perhaps see a reference to it in Micah 1¹⁰⁻¹², a description of the invasion of Judah.

² An Ionian—*Iatna*, *Iamani* = a Greek, of whose name Sargon was unaware.





20. MERODACH-BALADAN OF BABYLON

The 'prop of a wicked devil' (as the inscriptions call him) makes a grant of land, which was not his, to one of his supporters. Date about 720 B.C.

against the 'prince who could not save them', for *Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I called her Rahab that sitteth still* (Is. 30⁷).

About this time the inscriptions begin to speak of one Merodach-baladan, a Chaldaean prince who had made himself master of Babylon for twelve years (721-710 B.C.). It was perhaps during these years that he sent to Hezekiah the embassy mentioned in II Kings 20¹², Is. 39¹.

The suppression of this rebellion is described somewhat ferociously, in Sargon's Display Inscription:

710 B.C. Merodach-baladan, son of Iakin, king of Chaldea, seed of a murderer, prop of a wicked devil, who did not fear the name of the lord of lords, put his trust in the Bitter Sea with its tossing waves, violated the oath of the great gods, and withheld tribute. . . . Twelve years he ruled and governed Babylon, the city of the lord of the gods, against the will of the gods . . . I made ready my battle chariot, set my camp in order, and gave the word to advance against the Chaldaean, the treacherous enemy. And when Merodach-baladan heard of the approach of my expedition, he was seized with anxiety for his safety, and fled from Babylon to the city of Ikbi-bel, like a bat by night. (L. ii. 66.)

Sargon, however, did not long survive this triumph. He died in 705 B.C., as recorded in the *Limmu List*:

705 B.C. . . . a soldier entered the camp of the king of Assyria [Sargon], and killed him in the month Abib. And Sennacherib¹ sat on the throne. (Pinches, op. cit., p. 372.)

The death of the sovereign gave the signal, as usual, for widespread revolt. Possibly it was at the instigation of the still fractious Merodach-baladan that not only the East, but also Egypt under her new monarch So (Sabaco), Ammon, Moab, Phoenicia, and even Hezekiah of Judah were implicated

¹ Sennacherib—*Sin-ahe-erba*.

in the disaffection. Possibly this, rather than the earlier date, is the occasion to which we should assign the embassy of Merodach-baladan mentioned above. The roads to Jerusalem were alive, at any rate, with envoys whose reception by the king, in spite of Isaiah's protests, was far too kind.

For a time Hezekiah resisted their overtures, but when the people of Ekron deposed Padi their king, and were permitted to imprison him in the dungeons of Jerusalem, the die was cast: Hezekiah was in rebellion against Sennacherib beyond forgiveness.

Henceforth Jerusalem leaps into prominence on the Assyrian records as a centre of disloyalty, a fortress that may no longer be ignored.

THE SILOAM INSCRIPTION

Realizing the increased importance and peril of Jerusalem, Hezekiah hastened to strengthen its defences, and especially to ensure its water-supply in case of siege. Hitherto the city had been dependent on the fountain of the 'Virgin's Spring' outside the walls, and upon rock-cisterns for rain water. But now Hezekiah *made the pool, and the conduit, and brought water into the city* (II K. 20²⁰).

It is generally believed that this watercourse has been discovered in modern times, still very much as the engineers of Hezekiah left it nearly three thousand years ago, in a tunnel which winds for 1,700 feet from the Virgin's Pool to the Pool of Siloam—which at that time lay within the walls. The story of the discovery of the famous **Siloam Inscription** on the walls of this tunnel is as follows:

In the year 1880 some pupils of a German architect, C. Schick, were wading in a conduit under the walls of Jerusalem,

when one of the party slipped and fell in the water. As he scrambled out, he noticed some peculiar marks cut in the rock just above the water-level, dimly seen in the light of his candle. The faint marks were undoubtedly lettering, but they had evidently been submerged at various times, and largely filled in with a deposit of lime. Professor Sayce visited the spot some months later, and sat for hours in mud and water deciphering the inscription (for such it turned out to be) by candle-light. Later on, Dr. Guthe of the German Palestine Association removed the lime deposit by means of acids, and so recovered the writing in full.

There are six lines of scrawling inscription, written in very much the same Phoenician characters as the Moabite Stone of a century and a half earlier, in the Hebrew language, as follows:

c. 702 B.C. Behold the excavation. Now this is the story of the excavation. While the excavators were lifting up the pick, each towards his neighbour, and while there were yet three cubits to excavate, then was heard the voice of one man calling to his neighbour, for there was an excess of the rock on the right hand and on the left. And after that, on the day of excavating, the excavators had struck pick upon pick, one against the other, and the waters flowed from the spring to the pool for a distance of 1,200 cubits, and 100 cubits was the height of the rock over the heads of the excavators.¹

Such is the simple story of the triumph of Hezekiah's engineers: and such is the first and only pre-exilic Israelite inscription of any length discovered by the archaeologist.²

It is strange to reflect that, while the whole of the ancient

¹ For the Siloam inscription see Duncan, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. Pilcher (one ought perhaps to mention) dates the inscription much later than 700 B.C.—in the time of Herod, in fact—on orthographical grounds. *P.B.A.S.* 1897, p. 165.

² See, however, App. II, 'The Lachish Letters'.

East was littered with grandiloquent records of royal triumphs, this humble boast of a few navvies digging a conduit should be the only one left by the children of Israel.

THE TAYLOR PRISM

Hezekiah was allowed, it would seem, two or three years to consolidate his position, but in 701 B.C. came the inevitable 'Wolf on the Fold'. The Biblical account of this exciting episode,¹ one of the most familiar in the Old Testament, is supplemented by almost identical inscriptions on the Bulls of Nineveh at Kuyunyik, and on the much discussed **Taylor Prism**, or hexagonal 'cylinder' now in the British Museum.

It is impossible here to enter into the problem of squaring the narratives in detail: all we can do is to outline briefly what (to the present writer) seems the most likely sequence of events.

The inscription on the Taylor Prism thus relates how Sennacherib in 701 B.C. invaded Palestine, defeated the rebels at the Battle of Eltekeh, and restored Padi to his throne at Ekron:

701 B.C. In my third campaign I went up against Syria. Elulaeus (*Lule*) king of Sidon . . . I defeated. His strong cities . . . bowed in submission at my feet. Ethbaal (*Tuba'lu*) I seated on the royal throne over them. . . . But Sidka king of Ashkelon, who had not submitted to my yoke . . . I tore away and brought to Assyria. Sharru-lu-dari, son of Rukibtu, their former king, I set over the people of Ashkelon. . . . (L. ii. 239.)

The officials, nobles, and people of Ekron, who had thrown Padi their king, bound by treaty to Assyria, into fetters of iron and had given him over to Hezekiah² the Jew—he kept him in confinement like an enemy—their heart became afraid and called upon the Egyptian kings, the bowmen, chariots and

¹ In II K. 18²⁵ 19; Is. 36, 37.

² Hezekiah—*Hazakiau*; the Jew—*Yaudaa*.

horses of the king of Meluhha (Ethiopia),¹ a countless host, and these came to their aid.

In the neighbourhood of the city of Eltekeh,¹ their ranks being drawn up before me, they offered battle. With the aid of Assur my lord I defeated them. The Egyptian charioteers and princes, together with the charioteers of the Ethiopian king, my hands took alive in the midst of the battle. Eltekeh and Timnah I besieged, I captured and took away their spoil. I drew near to Ekron¹ and slew the governors and nobles who had rebelled, and hung their bodies on stakes around the city. . . . Padi their king I brought out of Jerusalem.¹ I set him on the royal throne over them, and imposed upon him my kingly tribute. (L. ii. 240.)

This campaign is not mentioned but is perhaps implied in the Biblical narrative.

The reference to the kings (in the plural) of Egypt reminds us that at this time Sabaco had been succeeded by his much less capable son Shabataka, and the affairs of the country were once more in confusion. Shabataka was accepted in the Delta, but in Upper Egypt Amenartas, sister of the dead Sabaco, was still paramount with the Nubian Piankhi II her co-regent. Already prominent at the Theban court must have been Piankhi's son (by another wife) Tirhakah, now field-marshal, but finally Pharaoh of Egypt. Thus much may be read between the letters of that royal plural in the Taylor Prism.

The inscription continues with an account of the invasion of Judah:

701 B.C. As for Hezekiah the Jew, who did not submit to my yoke, 46 of his strong walled cities, as well as the small cities in their neighbourhood which were without number—by escalade and

¹ Luckenbill's identification of Meluhha with Ethiopia has been questioned, but receives support from such inscriptions as 'the border of Egypt which is on the frontier of Meluhha' (L. ii. 79), &c. Eltekeh—*Altaku*; Ekron—*Amkarruna*; Jerusalem—*Ursalimmu*.

by bringing up siege-engines, by attacking and storming on foot, by mines, tunnels, and breaches, I besieged and took : 200,150 people great and small, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle and sheep without number, I brought away from them and counted as spoil. (L. ii. 240.)

Of this attack upon the cities of Judah, we clearly have an account in the Bible, where we are told that *in the fourteenth* (an error for twenty-fourth?) *year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them* (II K. 18¹³), and in Isaiah 10²⁸ the route of the Assyrian advance is given—Aiath, Migron, Michmash, &c.

Sennacherib's progress was checked for a while by the formidable battlements of Lachish. A series of sculptures (now in the British Museum) describes the assault and capture of this city by the Assyrian. On one of the slabs the king receives its submission, the text reading :

701 B.C. Sennacherib, King of Hosts, King of Assyria, sat upon his throne of state, and the spoil of the city of Lachish passed before him.

Recent excavation¹ at Tell Duweir (the site of Lachish) shows evidence of the breach made by Sennacherib. It shows, too, that Nebuchadrezzar's subsequent attack (in 587 B.C.) had followed a different method—he had literally burnt his way through the limestone walls by heaping huge bonfires against them.

So far the course of events is plain enough.

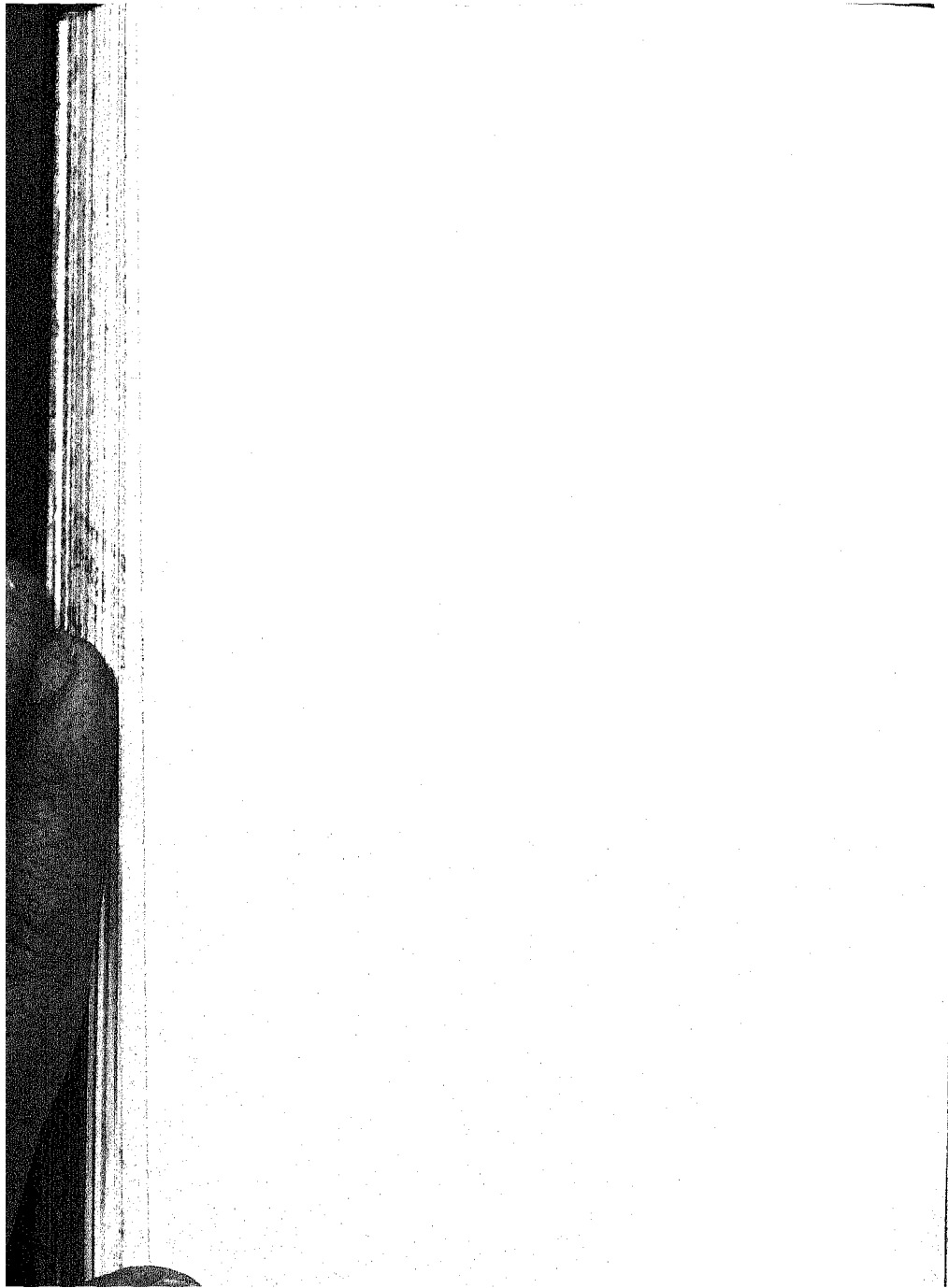
But here our difficulties begin. The Biblical version quite clearly implies, as indeed does the inscription up to this

¹ By the Wellcome Expedition of 1933-5. Lachish is undoubtedly to be located at Tell Duweir, and not (as previously supposed) at Tell el Hesiy. See Appendix II, 'The Lachish Letters.'



21. SENNACHERIB

The conqueror of Lachish sits on an eminence by the city wall receiving homage from the defeated Israelites, 701 B.C.



point, that the advance with all its engines of destruction stopped short, while still beyond striking distance, of the capital. *This very day shall he halt at Nob: he shaketh his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion* (Is. 10³²). And the account in Kings declares that Sennacherib, while still engaged on the siege of Lachish, received overtures and tribute from Hezekiah which secured the immunity of Jerusalem (II K. 18¹⁴).

The Taylor Cylinder, however, seems at first sight to describe an actual siege of the city.

701 B.C. Himself [Hezekiah] like a caged bird I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city. Earthworks I threw up against him. The one coming out of his city gate I turned back to his misery.¹ (L. ii. 240.)

Taking the records as they stand, this can only refer to the occasion when Sennacherib, still engaged in the siege of Lachish, sent his *Tartan*, *Rabsaris*, and *Rabshakeh with a great army unto Jerusalem*. . . . *And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool* (II K. 18¹⁷). This was not a siege, and the inscription itself, carefully read, distinguishes between the elaborate mechanical assault on the northern towns and the less organized thrust at Jerusalem. The First Person on the inscription, also, must not be pressed: in this case Sennacherib acted through his deputies.²

The inscription, without claiming the capture of Jerusalem, continues:

701 B.C. The cities of his, which I had despoiled, I cut off from his land, and to Mitinti king of Ashdod, Padi king of Ekron, and

¹ The last phrase is the usual mode of expressing a close blockade involving starvation of the inhabitants.

² 'In Assyria the King was the State; and all public acts, whether performed by the King in person or through one of his generals or officials, were recorded as the achievements or pious deeds of the King alone.' (Luckenbill, Preface.)

Silli-bel king of Gaza I gave them. And thus I diminished his land. I added to the former tribute, and laid upon them their yearly payment, a tax in the form of gifts for my majesty.

As for Hezekiah, the terrifying splendour of my majesty overcame him, and the Arabs and his picked troops, which he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem, his royal city, deserted him.

In addition to 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver, there were gems, antimony, jewels, large sandu-stones, couches of ivory, elephants' hides, tusks, maple, boxwood, all kinds of valuable treasures, as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female musicians, which he had them bring after me to Nineveh,¹ my royal city. To pay tribute and to accept servitude, he dispatched his messengers. (L. ii. 240.)

700 B.C. In my fourth campaign, &c., &c. (L. ii. 241.) [Sennacherib's inscription now deals with campaigns in the East.]

There is no difficulty in reconciling this with the statements in the Biblical narrative. Sennacherib has naturally omitted all mention of his subsequent demand for the surrender of the city and the defiant reply which Isaiah encouraged the king of Judah to return (II K. 18¹⁸⁻¹⁹). He has also omitted the more insistent repetition of this demand which he made from Libnah, and which received an even firmer refusal (II K. 19⁸⁻³⁴). Still more significantly the Assyrian has omitted to mention the disaster which suddenly overtook his forces, and his enforced retreat to Nineveh (II K. 19^{35, 36}).

But the tangible fact of the submission and the '30 talents of gold' tribute given in the first instance by Hezekiah, as recorded in the inscription, is admitted also in the Jewish annals, where we are told that the king even stripped the gold from the Temple doors to pay it² (II K. 18¹⁴).

¹ Nineveh—*Ninua*.

² The '800 talents of silver' of the inscription, however, becomes only 300 in the Bible.

Nor is there much difficulty in the Biblical mention of Tirhakah as 'king' of Ethiopia at this time (II K. 19⁹). It is true that in 701 B.C. the Ethiopian king of Egypt was Shabataka, and that Tirhakah did not succeed to the throne till 689 B.C. But there are innumerable instances of such anticipatory use of titles, and Tirhakah apparently served as field-marshal to the Pharaoh. Yet there are some who, pressing his royal title, conjecture that the Biblical narrative has combined together two assaults of Sennacherib upon Jerusalem: (1) the first in 701 B.C. (II K. 18^{17 ff.}), and (2) the second (II K. 19^{9 ff.}) about twenty years later, when Sennacherib towards the end of his reign and during the reign of Tirhakah is conjectured to have menaced Jerusalem on his way home from a successful campaign in Egypt.

After 701 B.C., however, there is no record in the inscriptions of any further raid on Judah. For the next hundred years no king of Judah ever seriously wavered in his allegiance to Assyria. From the archaeological point of view, this is regrettable, since it means that henceforward the Assyrian records have no occasion to mention the Jews at all, and that the important epoch of Manasseh-Amon-Josiah is practically a blank as far as archaeology is concerned.

There are one or two inscriptions, however, which have an interest for us. The death of Sennacherib (680 B.C.) recorded as a fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy—and *it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead* (II K. 19³⁷)—is thus noted in an inscription of Esarhaddon ('Prism S'), recently discovered:

680 B.C. In the month Nisan . . . I made my joyful entrance into the royal palace, the awesome place wherein abides the fate of

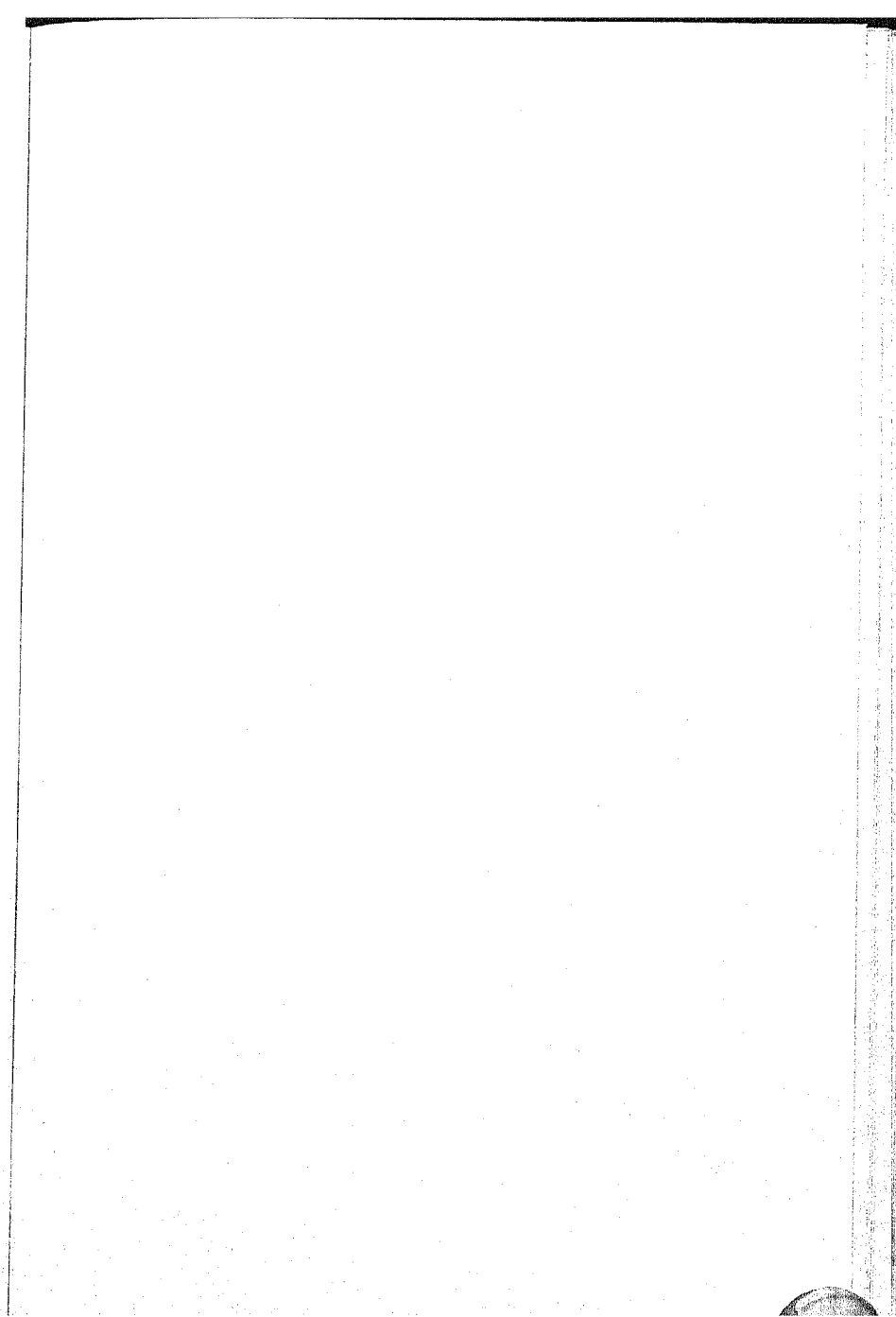
kings. A firm determination fell upon my brothers. They forsook the gods and returned to their deeds of violence, plotting evil. . . . They revolted. To gain the kingship they slew Sennacherib, their father. . . . The gods looked with disfavour upon the deed of the villains, which was committed in defiance of the will of the gods, and did not aid them. But they brought their forces to utter confusion and made them submit themselves to me.

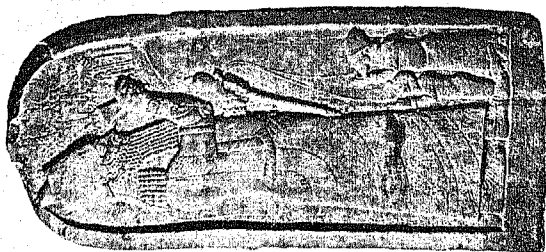
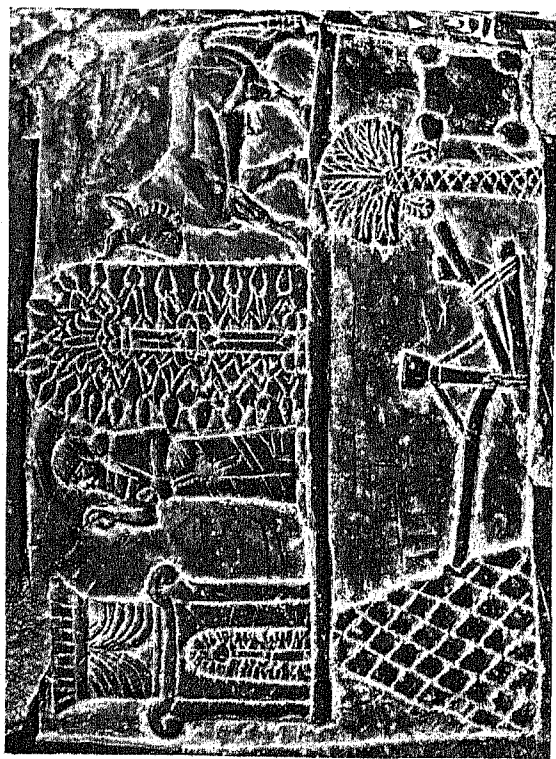
I rent my garments, and raised a cry. I roared like a lion, my passion was aroused. . . . I did not delay one day nor two. I did not even wait for my armies. I did not look back . . . I made my way to Nineveh painfully but quickly. . . . The people of Assyria . . . kissed my feet.

As for those villains who instigated revolt . . . they fled to parts unknown. (L. ii. 501-5.)

The Rassam Cylinder of Ashurbanipal adds a touch of local colour to the story of this famous assassination:

c. 660 B.C. The rest of the people who revolted against me, these by the colossi between which they had cut down Sennacherib my grandfather, I cut down as an offering to his shade. Their dismembered bodies I fed to the dogs. (L. ii. 795.)





22. ESARHADDON

Left. Top of a black stone commemorating Esarhaddon's restoration of Babylon.
Right. Esarhaddon holds captive two of his enemies with hooks in their noses.

XIV

LAST DAYS OF THE MONARCHY

THE story of the last hundred years of the Hebrew Monarchy and the ultimate fall of Jerusalem (687-586 B.C.) is told very fully in the Old Testament, especially in the biography of Jeremiah. Of archaeological evidence, however, there is little, save in general illumination of the political background.

To Esarhaddon,¹ the monarch who succeeded Sennacherib in 680 B.C., there are two Biblical references besides that already noticed. First, we are told that he colonized Samaria (Ezra 4²); and the inscriptions make frequent allusion to his practice in this respect, e.g.

679 B.C. I gathered together the kings of Hittite-Land (Syria) and the Sea-coast, all of them. And in another place I had a city built. . . . The people, spoil of my bow, of mountain and Sea of the Setting Sun, therein I settled. (L. ii. 512.)

Those of the sea I bade to make the mountain their home: those of the mountain, the sea. (L. ii. 522.)

His object was clearly to break down the national spirit of his victims by creating a racial mixture in unfamiliar surroundings.

The second reference to Esarhaddon (probably) is in II Chron. 33¹¹, (R.V. Marg.), where it is said that *the king of Assyria . . . took Manasseh with hooks, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.*² There is no confirmation of this late tradition, as far as Babylon is concerned, but the inscriptions do speak of a compulsory visit to Nineveh: c. 678 B.C. At that time the older palace of Nineveh . . . had come to seem too small to me . . . and the people of the lands my

¹ Esarhaddon—*Ashur-aha-iddina*.

² For the 'hooks' compare Tirhakah's picture on the Senjirli Stele, see next page.

arms had despoiled I made to carry the basket and the hod. . . . And I summoned the kings of Syria and those across the sea—Baalü king of Tyre, Manasseh king of Judah . . . Silli-Bel king of Gaza, Mitinti king of Ashkelon, Ikausu king of Ekron, &c., &c. . . . 22 kings in all. I gave them their orders. (L. ii. 690.)

As to Babylon, once regarded as a 'slip' (for Nineveh) on the part of the author of *Chronicles*, the inscriptions prove that Esarhaddon did in fact aim at restoring the capital of Hammurabi to its ancient prestige, and personally helped in rebuilding it:

c. 679 B.C. I laid its foundation stone. I raised the hod to my own head, and carried it . . . I moulded a brick . . . Babylon I built anew . . . I made magnificent. (L. ii. 645, 646.)

It is hardly likely that he would have allowed Manasseh to return to Jerusalem without first seeing Babylon!

Isaiah's lament over Tyre and Sidon (Is. 23) comes into our minds as we read the inscriptions of Esarhaddon:

671 B.C. Conqueror of Sidon which lies in the midst of the Sea, destroyer of all its habitations, its walls: yea, its very site I tore up and cast into the midst of the Sea. (L. ii. 527.)

On the *Senjirli Stele*, Baalü king of Tyre is depicted lifting manacled hands in supplication to Assyria, with (next to him) Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, portrayed as a negro through whose lips passes a hook tied by a rope to the hands of Esarhaddon.

The fall of No-Amon, that is Thebes the City of Amen, is adduced by Nahum as a terrible warning to Nineveh (Nah. 3⁸), and is frequently mentioned by other contemporary prophets. It is clear from the inscriptions that Esarhaddon was the *cruel lord and fierce king* (Is. 19⁴) who achieved the highest ambition of all Assyrians—the conquest of Egypt. His long struggle with the Pharaoh Tirhakah is fully described in the records. In 671 B.C. Esarhaddon 'smote him five times with

the point of his javelin with wounds from which there was no recovery', captured Memphis his royal city 'in half a day', and 'tore up the root of Ethiopia out of Egypt' (L. ii. 580).

One would imagine, after this, that we had done with Tirhakah. But no: ten years later we find him once more back in Egypt, stirring up revolt against the Assyrian conqueror—this time Ashurbanipal, whose inscriptions inform us that in 661 B.C. Tirhakah 'marched forth to seize Egypt'. It was an unwelcome resurrection of one who had been wounded 'beyond recovery', and Ashurbanipal complains rather bitterly that 'the evil treatment which my father had given him had not penetrated his mind, so he came and entered Memphis'.

This time the Assyrian took no half-measures.

661 B.C. A swift courier came to Nineveh and reported to me. . . .

With furious haste my armies marched. . . . They defeated him. As for Tirhakah, fear and terror fell upon him, so that he went insane. From Memphis he departed . . . and to save his life, went aboard a ship. He fled alone. Fear and terror of my sovereignty overwhelmed him, and the night of death overtook him. (L. ii. 900-6.)

This is the last we hear of Tirhakah. It is forty years since his intervention saved Jerusalem (II K. 19⁹), and he must now be an elderly man; but at last the treatment meted out to him by Ashurbanipal has 'penetrated his mind', and he passes from the scene.

ASHURBANIPAL

There are no explicit references to Biblical history in the extant records of Ashurbanipal¹ (668-626 B.C.), save the bare mention of the name of 'Manasseh king of Judah' among his tributaries. Nor is Ashurbanipal named in the Bible, except

¹ Ashurbanipal—*Ashur-bani-apli* (Sardanapalus, Osnappar).

for the brief note in Ezra 4¹⁰, where 'the great and noble Osnappar' is said to have colonized Samaria.

Yet we cannot refrain from pausing to commemorate one to whom archaeologists owe such a debt of gratitude, and who (as Pinches observes) 'is worthy of a statue in every land where the languages of Assyria and Babylonia are studied'. Not only did the art of historical inscription reach its zenith through the encouragement of Ashurbanipal, but by a happy accident it was the discovery of his magnificent library at Nineveh which provided the master key to Mesopotamian literature.

Ashurbanipal is the only Assyrian king of whose very human personality we have more than the merest glimpse, and the record which he himself gives of his boyhood's studies is one which must appeal to the imagination and sympathy of every student:

c. 675 B.C. I have studied (*lit.* struggled with) the heavens with the learned masters . . . I have solved the laborious problems of division and multiplication, which were not clear. I have read the artistic script of Sumer and the obscure Akkadian, which is hard to master. At times I have taken pleasure in the reading of the inscriptions coming from before the flood; at times I have been angered because I was stupid and addled by the beautiful script. This is what was done all my days. (L. ii. 986.)

But life was not all study—like modern youth he 'made the wheels go round':

After this, I mounted my steed, I rode joyfully, I went up to the hunting lodge. . . . Holding the reins like a driver, I made the wheels go round . . . I wished to be the great lord. . . . At the same time I was learning royal decorum, walking in the kingly ways. My father saw for himself the bravery which the great gods decreed as my portion . . . he conceived a great love for me among my many brothers. (L. ii. 986.)

Finally, we must pay him this tribute: it has been remarked that in all Assyrian art, so harsh and cruel compared with Babylonian, the only official relief of a peaceful, happy scene is that of Ashurbanipal feasting with his queen.¹

DECLINE AND FALL OF NINEVEH

With the conquest of Egypt, Assyria attained her zenith. But it was not for long. The closing years of Ashurbanipal witnessed a steady decline of the over-ambitious and unwieldy empire of Nineveh: Egypt under Psammetichus I (664–609 B.C.) recovered her independence in 652 B.C. In 640 B.C. he even invaded the Assyrian territory of Philistia, and Syria once more flared into rebellion. From the distant north came the first rumblings of the Scythian thunderstorm, that terrible invasion from the frozen steppes of Russia which struck such terror into the heart of Jeremiah and all other men of vision in the ancient East—*Behold a people cometh from the north country . . . they are cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea, and they ride upon horses* (Jer. 6²²). From Jordan to Euphrates the Assyrian empire trembled in suspense.

Of this tragic twilight of the gods of Nineveh we possess a brief elegy inscribed upon the back of a tablet of Ashurbanipal, which is strangely reminiscent of the plaint of Job:²

c. 628 B.C. I who have offered sacrifice to the spirits of the kings who preceded me, and have so done good to god and man, to the dead and the living—why is it that disease, heartache, distress, and destruction are clinging to me? Enmity in the land, strife in the house do not depart from my side. Disturbances, evil words, are continually arrayed against me. Distress of

¹ J. W. Hunkin, *From the Fall of Nineveh to Titus* (Schweich Lecture, 1929).

² This inscription should be compared with the 'Lament of Tabi-utul-Enlil' mentioned below (p. 179).

soul, distress of body have bowed my form. I spend my days sighing and lamenting. . . . Death is making an end of me, is weighing me down. In anguish and grief I sit, lamenting day and night. I sigh, 'O god, to the one who fears not, give these afflictions. Let me see thy light. How long, O god, wilt thou do this to me? As one not fearing god and goddess I am treated.' (L. ii. 984.)

Truly a pathetic *memento mori* of 'the great and noble Osnappar' whose younger days had seen the peak of his kingdom's prosperity.

Perhaps it was the menace of the Scythian invasion which gave Josiah the incentive, and, since Assyrian control grew slack, the opportunity, for his far-reaching reforms (621 B.C.). It will be remembered that the immediate occasion was the discovery of the Book of the Law (Deuteronomy) during repairs to the Temple (II K. 22^{3 ff.}).

The story reads exactly like so many stories in the inscriptions, which describe how, during the restoration of ancient temples, little chambers which had been built into the wall were opened, and Foundation Records discovered—such, in fact, as were found by Woolley at Ur in our own day. Naville therefore suggests that the Book of the Law may have been similarly walled up by Solomon. But the very early date thus ascribed to Deuteronomy certainly cannot be accepted without drastic revision of the accepted critical position.¹

Nineveh's final death-struggle began within ten years of the passing of Ashurbanipal, the recently discovered Babylonian Chronicle fixing the date as 612 B.C., and supplying many fresh details. Here we learn how in 616 B.C. Nabopolassar 'King of Akkad' defeated the Assyrians at Kablini, and a

¹ Something of the kind, however, has been attempted, on purely critical grounds, by Prof. Welch. See note 2, p. 185.

combined force of Assyrians and Egyptians at Arrapha. The inscription then goes on to describe the capture of the 'Bloody City' itself:

612 B.C. In the fourteenth year, the King of Akkad (Nabopolassar of Babylon) mobilized his army *** the King of the Umman-manda (Cyaxares the Mede) over against the King of Akkad was encamped. They *** and joined forces with each other. The King of Akkad *** and Umakishtar (Cyaxares) *** he caused to cross over, and they went along the bank of the Tigris, and *** in Nineveh *** (L. ii. 1177.)

. . . Three times they battled *** a mighty assault he made upon the city. In the month of Abu, the *** day (the city was taken) *** A great slaughter was made of the people and nobles. On that day Sin-shar-ishkun king of Assyria fled from the city *** Great quantities of spoil from the city, beyond counting, they carried off. The city they turned into a mound and ruin heap *** The army of Assyria deserted the king, and *** (L. ii. 1178.)

Such is the prosaic record of the inscription, with which one compares the Hebrew prophet's well-known word-picture of the same epoch-making event—*Woe to the bloody city! . . . The noise of the whip, and the noise of the rattling of wheels; and prancing horses, and jumping chariots; the horseman mounting, and the flashing sword, and the glittering spear; and a multitude of slain, and a great heap of carcases: and there is none end of the corpses . . . Nineveh is laid waste* (Nahum 3).

So Nineveh, in the words of the inscription, is 'turned into a mound and ruin heap'. 'With a supreme, if unconscious irony, her own end is described in the very phrase with which her kings had so often vaunted their former conquests' (Gadd).¹

¹ See an excellent article with map, 'Splendours of Nineveh' (Spence) in W.O.P. 769.

From the archaeological point of view the collapse of Assyria was undoubtedly a great disaster, for here the steady stream of inscriptions which make the 'Assyrian period' quite the best documented in ancient history suddenly dries up. Compared with this the historical inscriptions of Babylonia and Persia are but a feeble trickle, so that the latter days of the Hebrew monarchy, the Exile, and the post-Restoration era receive singularly little illumination from the independent records.

Despite the fall of its capital, however, the Assyrian power was not yet quite at its end. Ashur-uballit, driven ever westwards by the united forces of Babylonia, Media, and the Scythians, stood at bay for several years in Carchemish, once the capital of the Neo-Hittite empire.

At this point we again make contact with Biblical history. Apparently it was not *against* the king of Assyria, but in support of him, that Pharaoh-Necoh¹ of Egypt marched his army up the Palestinian coast road towards Carchemish in 608 B.C. (II K. 23²⁹). Egypt, however, proved dilatory as usual. Necho lingered for some time first at Megiddo, where he slew Josiah king of Judah; and then at Riblah over the deposition of Jehohaz (II K. 23^{31 ff.}).

He arrived in consequence at Carchemish far too late to save the Assyrian remnant from the onslaught of the Babylonian general Nebuchadrezzar,¹ and was himself utterly routed (605 B.C.), only the sudden recall of his adversary to receive the crown of Babylon saving the Pharaoh from complete annihilation. With this Battle of Carchemish two ancient empires fell simultaneously to pieces. Of Assyria we hear no more: and Egypt never again becomes a first-class power.

¹ Necoh or Necho—*Niku-ah* on the inscriptions, showing that Necoh is more correct, though less usual. Nebuchadrezzar—*Nabu-kudur-usur*.

The magnificent city of Carchemish henceforth lay buried in the desert dust until excavations in our own day restored its beautiful and interesting monuments to light.¹

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

The Biblical account of the events leading to the fall of Jerusalem is well known. After the Babylonian victory at Carchemish, Jehoiakim of Judah had no choice but submission to Nebuchadrezzar; yet a few years later he was ill advised enough to change his mind. Before the inevitable punitive expedition, however, could be fitted out, Jehoiakim had been succeeded by his son Jehoiachin, so that it was the latter monarch who bore the brunt of the first Babylonian assault on Jerusalem in 597 B.C., when he and many of his subjects were transported to the east (II K. 24¹⁻¹⁰).

Zedekiah then became king of Judah, the last of the House of David. It seems strange that at this late hour, and after so many exposures, any Jewish sovereign should listen to Egypt, yet so it was. Pharaoh-Necoh had been succeeded in 593 B.C. by Psammetichus II, and he in turn by Hophra² in 588 B.C. At the latter's instigation Zedekiah revolted, with the result that in 586 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar rased Jerusalem to the ground (II K. 24^{17-25¹⁰}).

Such is the bare outline of the Biblical narrative. Unfortunately it stands alone, as up to the present the only inscription we have which deals with these events is a general account of Nebuchadrezzar's successes, which runs as follows:

c. 586 B.C. Under Marduk's mighty protection I marched through far-off lands and distant mountain ranges from the Northern

¹ Article by C. L. Woolley in W.O.P. 727.

² Hophra—*Apries*, in the Greek historians.

Sea to the Southern Sea, along far-stretching roads and paths which were blocked, where my steps were hindered and I was unable to stand: a toilsome journey, a thirsty way.

The rebellious I subjugated, enemies I took captive: the land I ruled justly, the people I cared for, the bad and ill-disposed I kept away from the people. Silver, gold, and precious stones, copper, palm-wood and cedar-wood, everything that was costly, in magnificent abundance, the product of the mountains, the yield of the sea, did I bring as a weighty gift and a rich tribute into my city of Babylon to the god's presence.

All of which, it must be confessed, adds very little to our information respecting Nebuchadrezzar, unless it be a glimpse into the amazing Philistinism of a man who could find nothing more desirable in Egypt and Jerusalem than 'silver, and gold, and everything that was costly'.

Thus the events connected with the fall of Jerusalem receive little or no additional light from the inscriptions.

Excavations in the city itself have proved equally disappointing. As we have already observed, Nebuchadrezzar's destruction of the city was 'nothing if not thoroughgoing, and most of the "ancient" remains of modern Jerusalem date from a period no earlier than Herod the Great (A.D. 30)'.

One relevant discovery may be worth a brief mention. Between the outer and the inner walls of the sixth-century city has been revealed the existence of a continuous space about thirty feet in width, which had evidently been left vacant. Of this Duncan observes: 'I cannot resist connecting this space between the walls with the statement in II Kings 25⁴. There we read that "The city was broken up (by the siege of Nebuchadrezzar)", and *all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate, between the two walls, which was by the king's garden*. This means that they escaped down the passage between the walls of the city, and out by the fountain

gate beside the Pool of Siloam, which opened on to the King's Garden. From that gate they took the nearest route to Jericho.'

An unexpected flood of light has been cast upon the closing years of the Hebrew monarchy by the recent excavations at Lachish (Tell Duweir), apparently among the most important ever made in Palestine. Since, however, the results have not yet been thoroughly sifted, nor the interpretation of them authoritatively accepted, we describe them in the Appendix.¹

¹ See Appendix II, 'The Lachish Letters'.

THE EXILE AND AFTER

THE remaining period covered by the historians of the canonical Old Testament, albeit with many wide gaps and puzzling ambiguities, includes the Exile, the Restoration, and the post-Restoration revival up to the days (probably) of Artaxerxes II, or roughly two hundred years (586-398 B.C.). The whole of the period is obscure: much of it is dark as night; and unfortunately the Biblical narrative is illumined only to a very slight extent by the discoveries of archaeology.

THE EXILE IN EGYPT

After the fall of Jerusalem, although most of the Jews were transported to Babylonia, some of them (including Jeremiah) fled to Egypt and settled in Tahpanhes (Daphne) under the Pharaoh Hophra (Jer. 43⁷), afterwards dispersing to other Egyptian cities such as Migdol and Noph (Memphis).

Traces of Hebrew occupation in this era have been found at many places in Egypt, in the shape of pottery, graves, brief Aramaic inscriptions, &c. Petrie,¹ excavating Hophra's palace at Memphis in 1908, found some Jewish tradesmen's dockets in the moat; and at Tahpanhes discovered the remains of the 'Pharaoh's House' where Jeremiah was told to *take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in mortar in the brick-work* (Jer. 43⁹). He could find, however, no signs of the actual stones. Interesting here was the discovery of a stele representing a god of mingled Jewish and Egyptian attributes, giving point to the Prophet's warning against heathen corruption.

¹ F. Petrie, *Palace of Apries* (1909).

Another curious relic found by Petrie was an Egyptian seal depicting a man emerging from the mouth of a huge fish, his elbows resting on the shore. The discoverer deduced that the story of Jonah, which has parallels in Greek art, was current also in Egypt.

The inscriptions show that Egypt was invaded by Nebuchadrezzar in 568 B.C., and reveal the curious fact that henceforward Old Cairo was known as 'Babylon' and its residents as 'Babylonians', much to the confusion of historians and commentators—?cf. *She that is in Babylon* (I Peter 5¹³).

Such were the beginnings of the Egyptian dispersion of the Jews, which was to endure for so many centuries, to become world-famous at the university of Alexandria, and to produce some of the most remarkable of their literature.

This is not the place to discuss the vast subject of the influence of Egyptian literature on the Old Testament and Apocryphal writings of the Jews, which must be studied in the many specializing books on the subject. There we shall find many affinities between Egyptian and Hebrew lyric poetry: very striking is Weigall's juxtaposition of Akhnaton's *Hymn to Aton* with Psalm 104; and similar parallels have been pointed out in the *Hymns to Ra*, the *Pyramid Texts*, the *Hymn to Amon*, &c.

The Egyptians possessed from the most ancient times a Wisdom Literature not unlike that of the Jews, and many correspondences have been pointed out between the latter and such works as *The Instruction of Ptah Hotep*, *The Admonitions of a Sage*, &c. 'Indeed,' observes Mace,¹ 'it is hard to escape from the conclusion that the Hebrews deliberately modelled their Wisdom Books on Egyptian patterns.' The

¹ A. B. Mace, *Annals of Archaeology* (1922), ix.

Book of Job in particular appears to be saturated with the atmosphere of Egypt.

The influence was not, however, all on one side. Much of the later Wisdom Literature of Egypt evidently owed its inspiration to the Hebrew Bible. Writing of the many curious parallels between the recently discovered Teaching of Amen-em-ope and the Biblical Book of Proverbs, Oesterley remarks that 'when it is a question of religion and ethics we contend that Amen-em-ope and probably other Egyptian thinkers of like exalted mentality were more likely to have been influenced by the Hebrew genius, than that Israelite religious leaders should have borrowed from Egypt'.¹

Finally, we must not, of course, forget the tremendous impulse given by the Alexandrian Septuagint version of the Scriptures towards the wider study of the Old Testament.

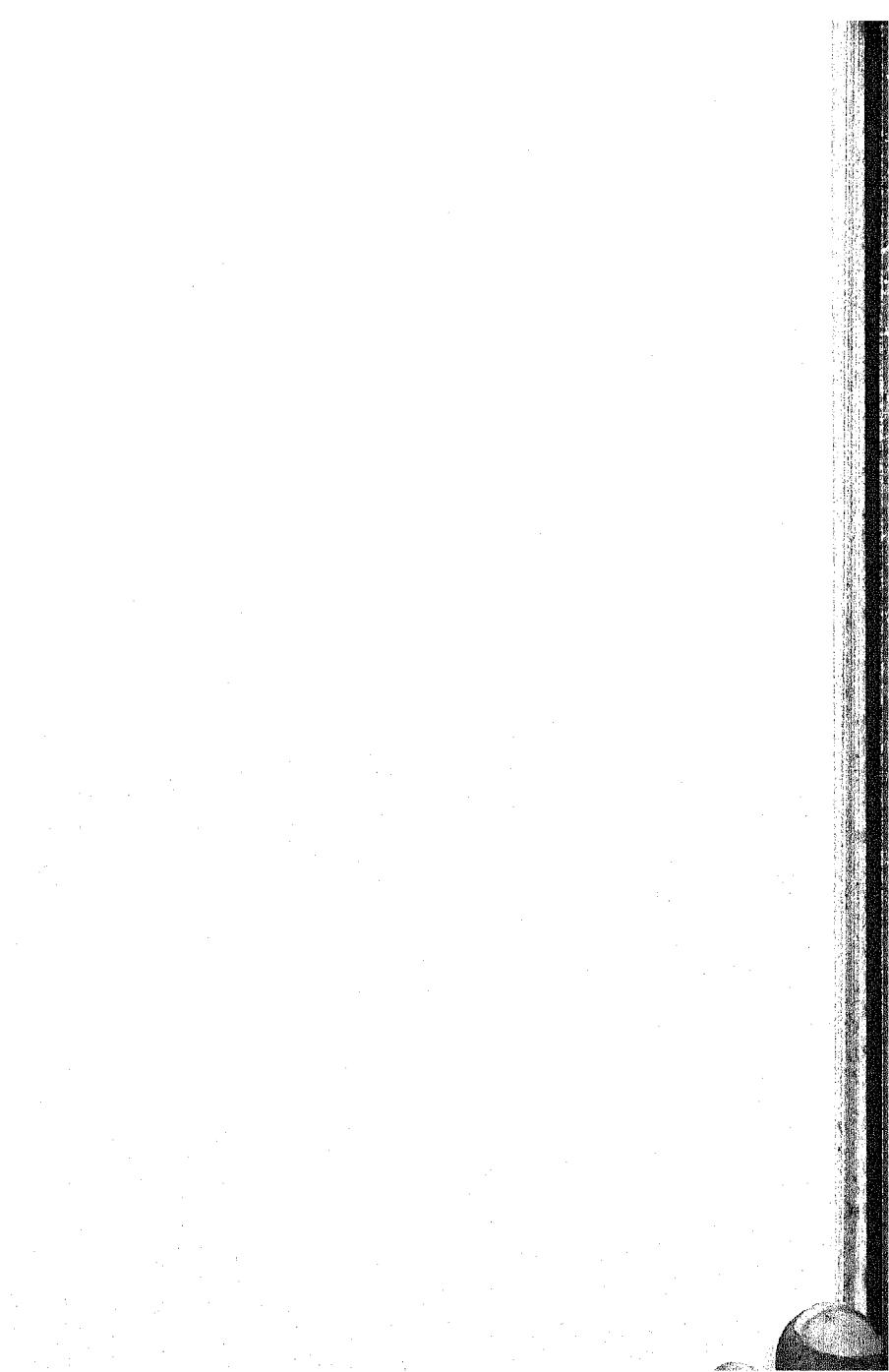
THE EXILE IN BABYLON

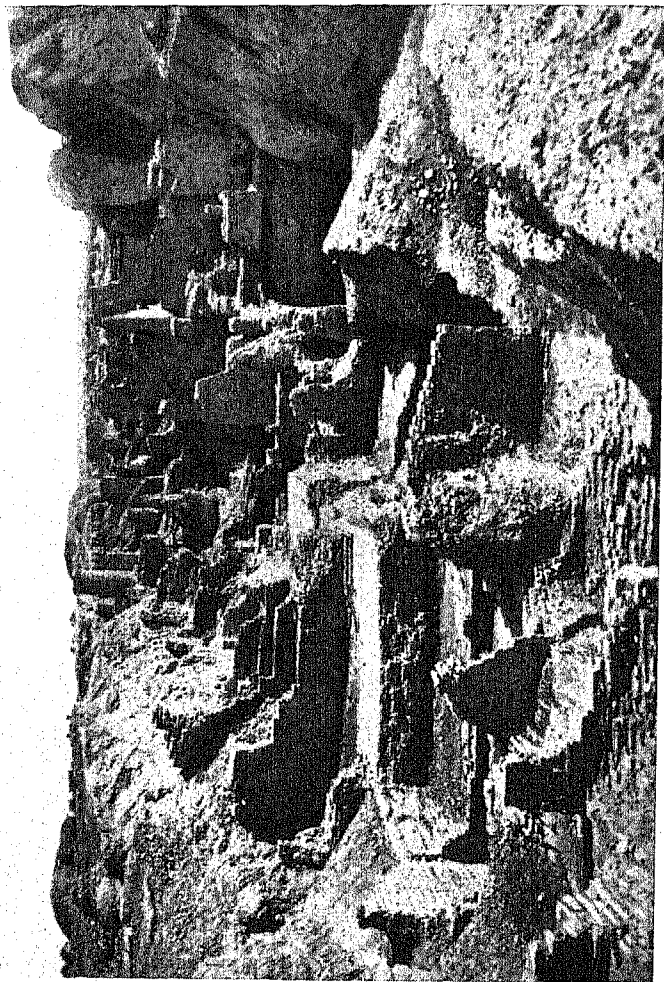
Very scant is the light which archaeology throws upon the Babylonian Exile. There is no trace, for instance, of the name Daniel or yet of Belteshazzar in any of the extant contract-tablets, nor do the inscriptions (although almost entirely of an ecclesiastical nature) mention the Golden Image which Nebuchadrezzar the King set up. Even the Plain of Dura cannot be identified.

That the victims' consignment to the Burning Fiery Furnace and the Lion's Den were at any rate in keeping with the times, is shown by two inscriptions of Ashurbanipal:

- I. Saulmagina my rebellious brother, who made war with me, they threw into a burning fiery furnace, and destroyed his life.
- II. The rest of the people who had rebelled they threw alive among bulls and lions, as Sennacherib my grandfather used

¹ W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Wisdom of Egypt and the Old Testament* (1927).





23. BABYLON TO-DAY

All that is left of Nebuchadrezzar's Hanging Gardens of Babylon, once one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

to do. Lo, again following his footsteps, those men I threw into the midst of them.¹

The portion of Daniel which receives the best general illustration is Nebuchadrezzar's proud boast of the splendour of his capital—*Is not this great Babylon, which I have built?* (Dan. 4³⁰). The inscriptions show that the city did indeed owe most of its immortal reputation for magnificence to this monarch, from its noble Ishtar Gate and Festival Street to that Seventh Wonder of the World, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon made by Nebuchadrezzar for his Median bride.²

Archacology has, however, explained Daniel's hitherto mysterious reference to one Belshazzar as the last king of Babylon at the time of its fall (Dan. 5³⁰). Actually, the last king was Nabonidus³ (555–538 B.C.), as the Greek historians had said: but it now appears that Nabonidus had a favourite son named Belshazzar to whom he entrusted the regency of Babylon, and who had thus become its *de facto* ruler at the time of Cyrus' invasion. The author of Daniel, therefore, who never mentions Nabonidus at all, is to this extent vindicated.

In this connexion the two following inscriptions may be quoted:

I. From the temple of the Moon at Ur: a psalm.

c. 550 B.C. As for me, Nabonidus, king of Babylon,
From sin against thy divinity save me,
And grant me a long life.
And as for Belshazzar my eldest son,
The offspring of my heart . . .
Let not sin possess him,
And satisfy him with the fullness of life.

¹ H. F. Talbot, *P.B.S.A.* ii. 361 (literal translation).

² See W.O.P. 605, 645.

³ Nabonidus—*Nabu-na-id*; Belshazzar—*Bel-shar-uzur*; Cyrus—*Kurash*.

II. From the Babylonian Chronicle

549 B.C. In the seventh year king Nabonidus was in the city of Tema [his newly built summer residence in Syria]. The king's Son (Belshazzar), the great men, and his troops were in the land of Akkad. The king himself did not come to Babylon.

The defeat of Babylon and even the identity of her conqueror had long been foreseen by the Prophets of the Exile (Is. 45¹, &c.) The successors of the great Nebuchadrezzar were men of straw, and already the star of Cyrus king of Anshan was rising. At length, after defeating his suzerain Ishtumegu (Astyages) king of Media and Croesus king of Lydia, Cyrus chased Nabonidus out of Tema and in 538 B.C. took Babylon itself. *Sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon*, cried the Exiles as they saw their oppressor laid low, *Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans . . . for thou shalt be no more called The lady of kingdoms* (Is. 47^{1, 5}).

Of this world-shaking catastrophe we are fortunate in possessing, almost as it were on its last surviving page, the contemporary record of the Babylonian Chronicle:

538 B.C. In the month Tammuz, Cyrus made battle at Opis on the Tigris among the soldiers of Akkad. The people of Akkad raised a revolt: people were killed: Sippar was taken on the 14th day without fighting. Nabonidus fled.

On the 16th day Gobryas (Ugbaru), governor of Gutium and the soldiers of Cyrus entered Babylon without fighting. After Nabonidus they pursued. He was captured in Babylon.

At the end of the month the forces of Gutium surrounded the gates of the Temple of Bel. A religious Festival . . . was not being made.

On the third day Cyrus descended to Babylon. They filled the roads before him. Peace was established in the city. Cyrus promised peace to Babylon and all its inhabitants.

Gobryas appointed governors in Babylonia, and . . . the gods of the land of Akkad, whom Nabonidus had sent down to Babylon, returned to their places.

On the eleventh day Gobryas went up by night against *** and the son of the king [Belshazzar?] died. . . . There was weeping in Akkad, all the people bowed down their heads.

On the fourth day Cambyses son of Cyrus went to the Temple of Nebo. . . . (Pinches, op. cit. p. 415.)

In the entry for the 'eleventh day' it is possible we may see a confirmation of the Biblical statement, *In that night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain* (Dan. 5³⁰).

The Jews naturally hailed the fall of Babylon as presaging the long-awaited restoration to their homeland. Yet the interlude had been anything but wasted, for it is not too much to say that we owe our Old Testament in its present form largely to those fruitful years.

The influence of Babylonian culture, in fact, upon the Jewish writers of the Exile can probably not be exaggerated. But again we must refer the reader to works dealing specially with that large subject.¹

As from Egyptian, so from Babylonian literature there are many parallels with the Wisdom Books, such as:

In the time of anger, thou shalt not speak swiftly:
If thou speakest quickly, thou shalt repent afterwards.
The fear of the lord begets favour.

Most notable, perhaps, of all is the celebrated Babylonian or rather Sumerian *Poem of the Righteous Sufferer*,² the hero of which, Tabi-utul-Enlil, has often been called the 'Babylonian Job'. The gist of the poem is that Tabi-utul-Enlil, a

¹ e.g. S. Langdon, *Babylonian Wisdom* (1923). Also G. A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible*, c. xxi (U.S.A. 1916).

² The poem originally emanated from the temple school of Nippur in the Isin period (Langdon).

righteous and prosperous Babylonian, suddenly fell from his high estate, was reviled by his former friends, and sank into deep dejection. He questions the justice of God, who seems to have abandoned him in spite of all his good works and pious observances:

Who understands the will of the gods in heaven?
The counsel of God, full of knowledge, who understands it?
He who was alive yesterday evening, is dead to-day,
Quickly is he cast into gloom, suddenly is he cast down.
My eyes look, but see not:
My ears are open, but they hear not.
The house has become my prison.
God came not to my aid, he took not my hand.
Before my death, lamentation for me was finished.
All my friends said, How is he disgraced.

But in the end the gods relent. He sees a vision in which an angel announces that the 'woe is overcome', and all the devils which were trying him are banished away.

THE PERSIAN PERIOD

No actual 'Decree of the Medes and Persians' ordering the restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem (Ezra 1¹) has yet been found; but that such clemency was the general policy of Cyrus is shown by the following extract from the celebrated Cylinder of Cyrus found by Hormuzd Rassam in Babylon:

536 B.C. . . . Cyrus had mercy on all the lands: all of them found and looked upon him. Marduk sought also a just king, whose hand he might hold, Cyrus king of Anshan: he called his title and proclaimed his name to all the kingdoms.

The land of Qutu, all the troops of Manda, Marduk placed under his feet: he caused his hand to capture the people of the dark head (i.e. Asiatics): in righteousness and justice he cared for them. Marduk, the great lord and protector of his people,

looked with joy upon his fortunate work and his just heart. He commanded that he should go to Babylon . . . like a friend and a companion he walked by his side. . . . Without fighting and battle he caused him to enter Babylon. . . . He delivered Nabonidus, who did not fear god, into Cyrus' hand. All the people . . . bowed down beneath him and kissed his feet: they rejoiced for his sovereignty, their countenances were bright.

Marduk, who gives life to the dead, spared all on every side from destruction and misery. Well did they do homage to Cyrus, and hold in honour his name.

I am Cyrus, king of the host, the great king, the powerful king, . . . king of the four quarters of the globe, son of Cambyses the great king, king of Anshan, grandson of Cyrus the great king, king of Anshan . . . the all-enduring royal seed whose reign Bel and Nebo love: for the contenting of their heart they desired his rule.

When I entered in peace into Babylon, I founded in the king's palace a seat of dominion with pleasure and joy. . . . My vast army marched in the streets of Babylon peacefully. . . . I had care for the inhabitants of Babylon. I comforted their sighing, I did away with their distress. . . .

By command of Marduk every king from every region from the upper sea to the lower sea as well as the Bedouin tent-dwellers brought their costly gifts and kissed my feet. . . . The gods dwelling within them I returned to their homes, and caused eternal shrines to be built. All their people I collected and restored to their homes.

And the gods of Sumer and Akkad, which Nabonidus, to the anger of Marduk, had brought to Babylon, I restored in peace to their shrines—shrines of joy of heart.

May all the gods whom I restored pray daily before Bel and Nebo for the lengthening of my days, and for my happiness, and may they say to Marduk, 'Cyrus thy worshipper . . . has founded an abode of peace.***' (Pinches, *op. cit.*, pp. 420 ff.)

It is clear from this delightful inscription that Cyrus was sympathetic to the religious feelings of his subjects, and

merciful to those vanquished by his arms. How welcome is the change of tone from the self-laudatory, ruthless, and blood-thirsty records of his Assyrian and Babylonian predecessors. No wonder the Exiles wrote of him with lyrical enthusiasm as the 'Shepherd', the 'Servant of God', the 'Anointed of the Lord'.

Unfortunately this is the last cuneiform inscription that has any bearing upon Biblical history. It is, of course, possible that others may be discovered. The decrees of the Persian kings mentioned with such particularity in Ezra, Nehemiah, and other Books have the appearance of being based upon genuine documents, and there is no reason why some future Layard should not discover perhaps at Shushan (Susa), or at Achmetha (Ecbatana), a royal library like that of Ashurbanipal.

Up to the present, however, the whole of the Persian period, obscure though the Biblical record leaves it, receives very little additional illumination either from archaeology or from any other source, and this in spite of the fact that we now approach the era of the great Greek historians such as Herodotus. The Hebrews, in fact, seem still to be resting on the 'blind spot' in their contemporaries' eyes.

Extensive excavations in Persia have failed to elicit any information about the Jews. At Susa, Cyrus' fortifications have been excavated, and the remains of Xerxes' 'Shushan the Palace', where Esther (if Ahasuerus was really Xerxes¹) may have feasted Haman under the shadow of his gallows. At Persepolis recent excavation has laid bare the Palace of Darius and that wonder of its age, the Hall of a Hundred Columns or Apadana of Xerxes. The inscription of Darius carved in three languages high up on the towering Rock of

¹ Some recent scholars hold that Ahasuerus was Artaxerxes II (404-358 B.C.), and that Esther flourished about 390. (See Olmstead, *op. cit.*)

Behistun has been interpreted—the first of all cuneiform inscriptions, in fact, to yield its secret, and so provide a clue to the rest.¹ And the tombs of Darius, Xerxes, Artaxerxes, and Darius II have been explored, cut out of the living rock at Nakshi Ristan. Marvellously vital and beautiful are the artistic treasures which have been brought to light,² but so far the main discovery bearing upon Biblical history has been the famous Code of Hammurabi described above,³ which, though belonging to Babylon, had been hauled up to Susa, and there was found.

The existence of a Jewish colony clinging to Babylonia a century after the Restoration has also been revealed through the recovery of the ledgers of the Jewish firm of Murashu and Sons, who flourished in Babylon during the reign of Artaxerxes I and Darius II, and who may thus have done business with Nehemiah and Ezra.

THE COLONY AT ELEPHANTINE

The most interesting discovery of all—though, far from illuminating this Dark Age, it only makes the darkness more visible—is undoubtedly that of the much-discussed **Elephantine Papyri**, proving the existence during the Persian period of a very queer little Jewish colony at Elephantine, or Yeb, an island in the middle of the Nile near the present Assouan Dam. Here at the beginning of the present century a number of Aramaic papyri were 'dug out of the mounds of the old city, from the heaps of decayed bricks which the natives carry away as manure for their fields' (Naville).

¹ It was Rawlinson's decipherment of the Persian (Zend) inscription on this monument in 1846 which led to the decipherment of the Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions, the script in each case being cuneiform.

² For good description and photographs see W.O.P. 51, 253, 516, 705, 761.

³ See pp. 87 ff.

Their contents were so strange that at first they were hotly denounced as forgeries 'from a factory of spurious literature, apparently established early in the nineteenth century, which must be under the direction of some one with a certain amount of Semitic learning, but who has taken insufficient pains to free his products from flaws which betray their impure origin'.¹ But their authenticity is now universally accepted.

Briefly the papyri are a collection of official, business, and domestic letters exchanged among the members (named Hosea, Azariah, Zephaniah, Jonathan, Nathan, &c.), of a Jewish military settlement at Yeb. There are also 'carbon copies', as it were, of dispatches sent from Yeb to Palestine. The documents are self-dated as written between 494 and 400 B.C., but carry the history of the colony back to beyond 525 B.C.

How far beyond, and how these Jews came to find themselves in Elephantine at all, is still a puzzle. All we know is that when Cambyzes invaded Egypt in 525 he found a Jewish temple to Jehovah already in existence on the island, dating back to 'the days of the kings of Egypt'. The usual suggestion (following a hint in the late and fanciful *Letter of Aristeas*, c. 100 B.C.) is that these Jews were descendants of mercenaries imported from Judea by Psammetichus II just before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. If so, they must have gone over in a body to the Persian conqueror, for the papyri exhibit them as a Persian garrison under Persian and Babylonian officers.

In passing, this Jewish garrison provides us with a remarkable instance of that 'blind eye' of which we have spoken. By a curious coincidence, it so happens that the great and observant Greek historian Herodotus personally visited Ele-

¹ L. Belleli, *The Elephantine Papyri* (1909), a book written specially to prove that the papyri were spurious.

phantine at the very time the papyri were being written (his Egyptian tour took place about 440 B.C.), and has much to say about the island and its inhabitants: he expressly notes that 'the military stations are regulated to this day by the Persians, as they were under King Psammetichus: for there are Persian garrisons now stationed at Elephantine and Daphne'. Yet not once does he mention Jews.¹

The Judean origin of the colony, however, is rendered doubtful by its consistent use of the Aramaic language, which at this time was confined to Syria and Mesopotamia. Oesterley therefore, amongst others, suggests that they were originally Israelites deported to the Euphrates after the fall of Samaria, and thence, enlisting in the victorious armies of Assyria, arrived in Egypt. In other words, at Elephantine we have actually found some of the 'Ten Lost Tribes'.

But stranger than the fact of their existence in Elephantine is the manner of it. According to the generally accepted view, the Deuteronomic reforms, dating from Josiah (621 B.C.), insisted that there should be only one Temple to Jehovah in all the world.² It is therefore extraordinary indeed that the Temple at Elephantine should be found at this late date not only in full working order, with altar, sacrifices, and priesthood, but clearly so maintained without any consciousness of illegality. Its votaries even write to the High Priest at Jerusalem asking for his support. Perhaps they claimed as their sanction the ancient prophecy: *In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt* (Is. 19¹⁹).

That their festivals included even the Passover (celebrating,

¹ Herod. ii. 29, 30, 175; iii. 19. He can even travel through Palestine without mentioning them.

² According to some recent scholars, however, the Book of Deuteronomy (save in one interpolated passage, viz. 12¹⁻⁷) nowhere forbids a multiplicity of altars. See Welch, *op. cit.*

be it remembered, the deliverance from Egypt) is proved by the touching little **Ostrakon of Haggai**, where an absent parent makes provision for her little ones to keep the Feast; and also by the somewhat mutilated **Hananiah's Passover Letter**, where the garrison is given a military order to observe the Passover, and Darius II himself reminds them of the correct Mosaic ceremonial¹ (Cowley, p. 21).

But the most interesting letter of all is the celebrated **Epistle of Jedoniah**, High Priest of Yeb, to Bagoas, the Persian Governor of Jerusalem, complaining of the destruction of the Elephantine Temple by the local Egyptians:

407 B.C. The seventeenth year of Darius II (Nothus) King of Persia.

Unto our lord Bagoas, governor of Judah, thy servants Jedoniah and his associates the priests who are in Yeb the fortress, Greetings. May the Lord the God of Heaven appoint thee before Darius the King a thousand times more even than at present.

Now the priests of the god Khnub who are in Yeb the fortress connived with Waidrang the acting governor here, that they should do away with the Temple of Jehovah which is in Yeb: and Waidrang gave orders that it should be destroyed. Consequently the Egyptians entered the Temple, brake the stone pillars, the five stone gates and the swinging doors, and rased it to the ground. The roof of cedar they burnt with fire, and carried off the vessels of gold and silver.

Now from the days of the Kings of Egypt our forefathers built this Temple in Yeb the fortress, and when Cambyses² invaded Egypt this Temple was found built: and although the

¹ Thus confirming Ezra's record of the interest taken in Jewish ritual by the Persian Kings (Ezra 7 11 ff.).

² Perhaps Cambyses recognized the Elephantine Jews as immigrants from his own empire. It is strange to reflect that in 525 B.C., with the Temple of Jerusalem still in ruins, this edifice in Yeb must have been the only Temple to Jehovah in the world.

[illegible]

24. AN ELEPHANTINE PAPYRUS

Section of the 'carbon copy' of a petition addressed by the Jewish priests at Elephantine to Bagoas, Governor of Judah, requesting his help in rebuilding their local Temple of Jehovah, dated 407 B.C.

temples of the gods of Egypt were overthrown, not a thing in this Temple was harmed.

On the destruction of our Temple by Waidrang, we sent a letter to our lord, and also to Jehohanan the High Priest¹ of Jerusalem and his associates, and a third letter to Ostan the brother of Hanani and the elders of Judah. But they have sent us no reply.

Therefore we appeal to thee, Bagoas, to think upon this Temple to rebuild it. Since the Egyptians will not permit us to rebuild it, let an order be sent unto them to rebuild the Temple of the Lord Jehovah in Yeb in the way it was built formerly: and meal-offerings, and incense, and burnt-offerings let them offer upon the altar of the Lord Jehovah in thy name, and we will pray for thee at all times.

Concerning payment for this, we have sent information. Also the whole is told in a letter we sent in our name to Delaiah and Shelemiah, sons of Sanballat, governor of Samaria. You should know, however, that Arsames, Viceroy of Egypt, knew nothing of all this evil, that was done unto us. (Cowley, p. 30.)

The Sanballat mentioned above is probably the same whose hostility to the Jews in Jerusalem is so frequently noted by Nehemiah. It was a subtle move to invoke his aid. Perhaps, if these Elephantine Jews were really descended from the Israelites of Samaria, there was still a fellow feeling between them and the Samaritans; and the thought that by encouraging Jedoniah he was annoying the orthodox priests in Jerusalem would doubtless please Sanballat. At all events we know that he sent a sympathetic reply:

c. 406 B.C. Bagoas to Jedoniah.

Let Waidrang rebuild the Temple of Jehovah in its place, like as it was before, and let sacrifice be offered as of old. (Cowley, p. 32.)

¹ Possibly the Jehohanan or Johanan of Ezra 10⁶ and Neh. 12²³, perhaps a son-in-law of Sanballat (Neh. 13²⁸). Hanani may be the person named in Ezra 10²⁰, who had married a foreign wife.

But whether the Temple was ever actually so restored we do not know.

Such is the strange story of the Elephantine Papyri. Its intrinsic interest has led us to give it more prominence than it deserves, for in truth this little community was but an eccentric deviation from the broad pathway of Hebrew history: it led nowhere, and had no influence on the development even of Egyptian Judaism. Doubtless the Reforms of Ezra, which (as recent scholarship holds) took place some ten years later than the Epistle of Jedoniah (in 398 B.C.), put an end for ever to such unauthorized pretensions as those of Elephantine.

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APPENDIX I

THE DATE OF THE EXODUS

On the date we assign to the Exodus¹ depends of course our dating of the Oppression, the Forty Years, the Invasion by Joshua, the period of the Judges, and (in short) our whole interpretation of the archaeological evidence.

Quite briefly, nearly every possible and impossible date for the Exodus, from 1580 B.C. to 1144 B.C., has been conjectured by one scholar or another during the past century. But towards the end of it, opinion settled down upon a moderately Late Date, ascribing the Oppression to Rameses the Great (1292-1225 B.C.), the Exodus to his successor Merenptah (1225-1215 B.C.), and the Invasion of Canaan to the period of anarchy in Egypt preceding the establishment of the XXth Dynasty (1205-1200 B.C.), the era of the Conquest and Settlement being thus shortened to roughly two centuries (1200-1000 B.C.). According to this theory, the chronology given in the Bible itself had to be entirely rejected.

This became the orthodox 'Late Date' view of the majority of responsible scholars, of whom perhaps the leading exponent (on this question) was C. F. Burney. For details, read his commentary on *Judges*, and his Schweich Lectures *Israel's Settlement in Canaan*.

Now it so happened that this view crystallized at a time when the major successes of Biblical archaeology seemed to have been achieved, and when the new 'Light on the Bible' had stimulated popular interest to such an extent that there was no end to the books on the subject. Thus it came to pass that practically all the standard commentaries, Bible dictionaries, 'Helps' to the Bible, and one-volume handbooks acquired almost a vested interest in the 'Late Date' view, and in their reprints of text, pictures, chronological charts, &c., propagate it to this day.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, however, a different view began to prevail, as the evidence of the recently discovered

¹ The problem is fully stated in J. W. Jack's *Date of the Exodus* (1925).

Tell el Amarna Tablets, the Israel Stele, and other records began to be fully assimilated. Thus Max Müller in 1897 wrote that 'the popular theory that Merenptah was the Pharaoh of the Exodus has been routed by the discovery of the "Israel Stele"'. In the same year Breasted declared that 'the idea that Merenptah was the Pharaoh of the Exodus must be given up, unless the Wilderness Wandering be given up also'. And the learned Norwegian scholar Lieblein immediately elected for the 'Early Date', that is, for the date assumed throughout this present work.

According to this view, the chronology explicitly given in the Bible itself is held, after all, to be correct in essentials. The Exodus is thrown back to about 1447 B.C., Amenhotep II thus becoming the 'Pharaoh of the Exodus' and his predecessor Thothmes III the 'Pharaoh of the Oppression'. The Wandering lasted, as the Bible says, for Forty Years (1447-1407 B.C.), thus dating the Invasion by Joshua at the time of Amenhotep III. And the full '480 years' claimed by the Bible is allowed between the Exodus and the founding of Solomon's Temple in 967 B.C.

This 'Early Date' view has now been adopted with minor modifications by one acknowledged scholar after another, such as H. R. H. Hall and A. H. Gardiner (1913), E. Peet (1922), C. A. F. Knight (1922), J. W. Jack (1925), J. Garstang (1931), T. H. Robinson (1932), A. S. Yahuda (1933), W. J. Phythian-Adams (1934), E. O. James (1935), and now (as will be seen from the preface) by Dr. W. A. F. Blunt. The 'Early Date' chronology has therefore been whole-heartedly adopted by the present writer. For details, see Chronological Table No. 1, 'From the Oppression to the Judges'.

APPENDIX II

THE LACHISH LETTERS

It is perhaps rather early to draw too definite conclusions from the remarkable discoveries recently (1933-5) made by the Wellcome Archaeological Research Expedition under Mr. Starkey at Tell Duweir, a mound some twenty-five miles south-west of Jerusalem. The results are still being published as we go to press, but it is clear already that we have here something of supreme, indeed unique, importance to Biblical archaeology.

Most interesting of all are the glazed potsherds, seventeen in number, inscribed in ink with Hebrew writing, which have been found under the debris of a guard-room within the bastion, shattered when Nebuchadrezzar besieged the city at the beginning of the sixth century B.C. The Biblical narrative tells us that Lachish and Azekah were the last of the 'fenced cities' of Judah to fall before his assault in 587 B.C. (Jer. 34⁷), and both places are named on shards which seem to belong to this period of excitement and alarm. Thus one letter (for the inscriptions are evidently letters) refers to the watch-signals exchanged between one fortress and another:

May Yahweh let my lord hear now to-day tidings of good. According to whatever my lord has sent, so has thy slave done. . . . if in his survey tour he had inspected, he should have known that as for the signal stations of Lachish we are observing according to all the signals which my lord gave, because we do not see the signals of Azekah.

Various considerations have led the explorers to identify the mound of Tell Duweir as the site of Lachish, and this is now generally accepted in place of the old identification with Tell el Hesy. The city was destroyed, as we have said, in 587 B.C., but the bulk of the 'Lachish Letters' seem, from internal evidence, to date from a time about ten years earlier, in the reign of Jehoiakim, when Nebuchadrezzar attacked Judah on his first Palestinian campaign in 598 B.C.

The importance of these potsherds will be realized when we remember that they are the only Hebrew inscriptions of any length which have survived from the pre-exilic period. From the Biblical point of view, their value can scarcely be overestimated, for here, if Dr. Torczyner's interpretation is correct, we make intimate contact for the first time with the inner life of Israel as depicted in the pages of Scripture. And here for the first time outside the Old Testament we find mention of a 'prophet', of the class which played so large a part in Hebrew history.

Thus, there is a set of four or five letters all referring apparently to the same incident, where we may even find confirmation of a passage in Jeremiah dealing with one such prophet.

LETTER No. III mentions three persons who are named in the Biblical narrative of the period—Achbor and Elnathan (Jer. 26²²), and Nedabiah a son of Jehoiachin (I Ch. 3¹⁸).

The commander of the army, Achbor the son of Elnathan, went down to come to Egypt. And to Hodaiah the son of Achiah and his men he sent to take them from here. And a letter has Nedabiah the grandson of the king (= Jehoiakim) brought to Shallum the son of Yaddua from the Prophet, saying, Beware.

LETTER No. VI seems to give us further particulars about the reasons for this warning, referring to a certain unnamed 'seer':

... a seer ... whose words are not good: to loosen the hands of the guards, and to cut off the hands of the country and the city ... bring him to the king, to Jerusalem. ...

LETTER No. XVI gives us the name, unfortunately only decipherable in part, of the seer concerned, viz. '...iah the prophet'.

Dr. Torczyner here definitely identifies the story of Uriah the Prophet (Jer. 26²⁰⁻³). Uriah was a native of Kirjath-Jearim, close to Lachish. Like Jeremiah, he roused the anger of Jehoiakim: *he weakeneth the hands of the men of war who remain in the city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking these words unto them* (Jer. 38⁴). He was warned, and fled for his life to Egypt, but was dragged back to Jerusalem by *Elnathan the son of Achbor* (sic), and put to death.

'Here, in the Lachish Letters', observes Dr. Torczyner, 'for the first time we have authentic, contemporary, internal confirmation of the political, military, and religious struggles during the last phase of the Judean kingdom, as told in the Holy Scriptures.'¹

¹ From articles in the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper, March-July, 1935.

APPENDIX III CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES

TABLE NO. 1. *From the Oppression to the Judges*

DATE B.C.	EGYPTIAN HISTORY AND RECORDS (Breasted's Dates)	THE 'EARLY DATE' AND BIBLICAL SYSTEM	THE 'LATE DATE' VIEW
1580	Expulsion of Hyksos	Beginning of Affliction	Beginning of Affliction
1580	<i>Dynasty XVIII</i> AHMOSIS	'The King who knew not Joseph'	Moses much later
1557	AMENHOTEP I		
1539	THOTHMES I Pharaoh's daughter, Hatshepsut (Thothmes II)	Adoption of Moses	
1501	THOTHMES III Karnak Inscription Canaan named	'Pharaoh of Oppression'	
1448	AMENHOTEP II	The Plagues of Egypt	
1447		The Exodus, 1447 Am. II, 'Pharaoh of the Exodus'	
1420	THOTHMES IV	The Wilderness Wan- dering, 1447-1407	
1411	AMENHOTEP III Revolt in Canaan	Moses on Sinai	
1407		Joshua takes Jericho c. 1407	Israel still in Egypt
1380	Tell el Amarna Tab- lets begin. Sagaz and Hittites invade Canaan on north; Habiru ditto on south-east	Habiru = Hebrews	Habiru not = He- brews, but = Sagaz
1377		Death of Joshua Elders take charge	
1375	AKHNATON	(The Biblical Dates are henceforth given as worked out by Garstang)	Biblical dates in Joshua- Judges entirely dis- regarded
1360	Tell el Amarna Tab- lets end	First Judge: Othniel se- cures, during Egyptian revival, 40 years' Rest	
1358	SAKERE Beginning of Egyp- tian revival		

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES

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DATE B.C.	EGYPTIAN HISTORY AND RECORDS (Breasted's Dates)	THE 'EARLY DATE' AND BIBLICAL SYSTEM	THE 'LATE DATE' VIEW
1356	TUTANKHAMEN		
1350	HARMHAB		
1319	Harmhab loses grip	End of 40 years' Rest Egion's Oppression	
1314	<i>Dynasty XIX</i> SETI I Asher and Aperiu in Canaan	Asher = a settled Joshua Tribe Aperiu = Hebrews Judge Ehud	Asher = a Tribe who had never gone to Egypt Aperiu not = Hebrews
1301			
1292	RAMESES THE GREAT Beginning of 80 years' revival in Egypt Defeat of Asher Ben-Anath Aperiu now in Egypt	Period of 80 years of Rest Shamgar ben-Anath Aperiu = Hebrew pri- soners in Egypt?	The 'Pharaoh of the Oppression' Ben-Anath not = Shamgar Aperiu = Hebrews of the Oppression
1225	MERENPTAH		1224 The Exodus
1223	Defeat of Asher and of Israel in Canaan (Israel Stele)	Sisera's Oppression Israel = Joshua's He- brews now settled in Canaan	Merenptah the 'Pha- raoh of the Exodus' Israel = a tribe who had never left Canaan; ditto Asher
1209	Anarchy in Egypt		
1201		Deborah and Barak	Joshua invades Canaan during anarchy
1200	<i>Dynasty XX</i> SET-NEKHT	40 years' Rest after De- borah	Conquest of Canaan
1198	RAMESES III	Approach of the Philis- tines	
1167	RAMESES IV Aperiu still in Egypt	Aperiu = Hebrew pri- soners of war? Midianite oppression	Period of the Judges Hebrews settle in Ca- naan after withdrawal of Egypt
1161			

DATE B.C.	EGYPTIAN HISTORY AND RECORDS (Breasted's Dates)	THE 'EARLY DATE' AND BIBLICAL SYSTEM	THE 'LATE DATE' VIEW
1157 1154 1152	RAMESES V RAMESES VI RAMESES VII RAMESES VIII RAMESES IX RAMESES X RAMESES XI	Judge Gidcon	1144 Toffteen's date for the Conquest
1118		1114 Abimelech 1111 Jephthah 1104 Beginning of Philistine supremacy over Canaan	
1100	SMENDES		Agreement henceforward with 'Early Date' view
1095	Dynasty XXI HERIHOR		
1085	PASEBKHANET I	1085 SAMSON	
1067	PAYNOZEM I	1065 ELI 1045 SAMUEL	

TABLE No. 2. *The Early Monarchy*

JUDAH		ALIBI
c. 1025?	SAUL	c. 987 Pasebkhanet II. 944 Shishak
c. 1010?	DAVID	
c. 987		
c. 970	SOLOMON	
	JUDAH	ISRAEL

N.B. Oesterley and Robinson's *History of Israel* is the authority for all the following dates.

936	REHOBAM	JEROBOAM I	931 Shishak's Inscription 924 Osorkon I
931			
924			
919	ABIJAM		
916	ASA		
914		NADAB	
912		BAASHA	
900			900 Benhadad II
888		ELAH	
886		ZIMRI	

TABLE No. 3. *The Assyrian Period*

DATE	JUDAH	ISRAEL	INSCRIPTION	ALIBI
886		OMRI	'Land of Omri' on the Inscr. Ashurnasirpal	
884				
875	JEHOSHAPHAT			
874		AHAB	Ashurnasirpal invades the West. L. i. 479	
866				886 Osorkon II
860			Shalmanezar II	860 Benhadad II Mesha of Moab
853			Battle of Karkar v. Ahab &c. L. i. 611	
852		AHAZIAH		
850	JEHORAM	JORAM		
848			Assault on Damascus. L. i. 568	
847				847 Moabite Stone
842	AHAZIAH		Hazael seizes throne. L. i. 681	842 Hazael
841	ATHALIAH	JEHU	Black Obelisk. L. i. 590 Tribute from Jehu Bab. Chron. L. i. 672	
838			Shalmanezar attacks Damascus. L. i. 578	
835	JOASH			
821		JEHOAHAZ		
814				814 Benhadad III
805			Adadnirari III Adad. besieges Damascus. L. i. 740	
804		JEHOASH		
795	AMAZIAH			
788		JEROBOAM II		
786	AZARIAH (UZZIAH)			
781			Shalmanezar IV Attacks Damascus (Limmu List)	
773			Ashurdan III	766 Piankhi I
771			Attacks Hadrach. A pestilence (Limmu List)	
765			Eclipse of Amos	
763				
757	(JOTHAM)			
747		ZECHARIAH SHALLUM MENAHEM		
745			Tiglath-pileser III (Pul)	Rezin
744	JOTHAM			
742	AHAZ			
738			Tribute of Menahem to Pul. L. i. 772 (Pul defeats Azariah of Yaudi. L. i. 770)	

DATE	JUDAH	ISRAEL	INSCRIPTION	ALIBI
737		PEKĀHIAH		
735		PEKAH		
734			Fall of Damascus. L. i. 776, 777 Naphthali invaded. L. i. 815	
733		HOSHEA	Pekah & Hoshea. L. i. 816	
730			Tribute of (Jeho-)Ahaz to Pul. L. i. 801	
727	HEZEKIAH		Shalmanezar V	
725				
724			Shalmanezar attacks Sama- ria	
722			Sargon	So of Egypt
720		Fall of Samaria	Fall of Samaria. L. ii. 4 Battle of Raphia. L. ii. 55 Battle of Karkar. L. ii. 55	
711			Fall of Ashdod. L. ii. 195	
710			Cylinder of Sargon. L. ii. 30 Fall of Merodach-baladan. L. ii. 66	
705			Death of Sargon	Piankhi II
705			Sennacherib	Shabataka
702				702 Siloam Inscript.
701			Taylor Cylinder. L. ii. 239, 240	
696	MANASSEH			689 Tirhakah
680			Sennacherib slain. L. ii. 501-505, 795 Esarhaddon 680 Childhood of Ashurbanipal. L. 2. 986	
679			Syrian campaign. L. ii. 512	
678			Babylon rebuilt. L. ii. 645 Manasseh tributary. L. ii. 690	
671			Fall of Sidon. L. ii. 527	
668			Memphis taken. L. ii. 580	
664			Ashurbanipal	664 Dynasty XXVI Psammetichus I
661			Tirhakah's revolt. L. ii. 900 And death. L. ii. 906	
641	AMON			
639	JOSIAH			
627			Death of Ashurbanipal. L. ii. 984 Ashuretililani Sinsharishkun	
616			Fall of Nineveh. L. ii. 1177	Nabopolassar of Babylon
612				

TABLE NO. 4. *The Babylonian and Persian Periods*

THE BABYLONIAN

612		Nabopolassar	
609			609 Pharaoh-Necho
608	JEHOIAKIM		605 Battle of Carchemish
604		Nebuchadrezzar	
597	JEHOIACHIN		
597	ZEDEKIAH		
593			593 Psammetichus II
589			589 Hophra
586	Fall of Jerusalem		
		Nebuchadrezzar's Conquests	
586	The Exile (Gedaliah governor in Mizpah)		
570			570 Amasis
562		Evil-Merodach	
560		Neriglissor	
556		Labashi-Merodach	
556		Nabonidus	
		(Belshazzar)	
538		Cyrus takes Babylon	

THE PERSIAN

538		Cyrus	
536	The Restoration	Cylinder of Cyrus	
529		Cambyzes	
522		Darius I	
516	Temple rebuilt		
485		Xerxes I	
464		Artaxerxes I (Longimanus)	
445	Nehemiah		
424		Xerxes II	
424		Darius II (Nothus)	
419			419 Passover Letter
407			407 Letter to Bagoas
404		Artaxerxes II	
398	Ezra's Reforms		
[380]	Esther wife of Artaxerxes II??		

APPENDIX IV

ANCIENT AUTHORITIES

BEFORE the discoveries of modern archaeology, our only sources of information for the prehistory of the ancient East were the following: (1) the Old Testament, (2) the 'Greek Historians'.

Chief among the latter are:

- i. HERODOTUS, the 'Father of History' (484-420 B.C.). Wrote a history, mainly extant, of the Graeco-Persian War, with an introduction to the history of the ancient East. Actually visited Babylonia, Palestine, and Egypt. Very trustworthy for what he saw personally, but otherwise notoriously credulous and inaccurate.
- ii. Berosus, a Babylonian priest (330-250 B.C.), wrote a history of Babylon in Greek, extant only in quotations by early authors. May have drawn his information from ancient records.
- iii. MANETHO, an Egyptian priest (300-240 B.C.), wrote a history of Egypt, also in Greek, now extant only in quotations. Probably based his narrative on ancient hieroglyphic records.
- iv. JOSEPHUS, a Jewish soldier (A.D. 37-100), wrote a history of the Jews in two volumes, (a) *The Antiquities*, (b) *History of the Jewish War*. Written in Greek, and still extant. Valuable for references to earlier writers, but very uncritical.

APPENDIX V

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CALENDAR

- 1798 Napoleon's Expedition to Egypt. Beginning of modern archaeology.
- 1830 *Egyptian hieroglyphs* first deciphered, by Young and Champollion.
- 1845 Layard's excavations in Babylonia.
- 1850 *Babylonian cuneiform* deciphered by Rawlinson.
- 1865 Foundation of Palestine Exploration Fund.
- 1866 *Moabite Stone* found by Klein.
- 1871 *Gilgamesh Epic* deciphered by George Smith.
- 1880 *Siloam Inscription* found by Schick.
- 1887 *Tell el Amarna* Tablets found.
- 1896 Merenptah's *Israel Stele* found by Petrie.
- 1901 *Code of Hammurabi* found by de Morgan.
- 1902 Macalister's excavations at Gezer.
- 1905 *The Elephantine Papyri* interpreted.
- 1907 *Boghaz Keui Tablets* found by Winckler.
- 1915 *Sumerian Epic of Paradise* published by Langdon.
- 1919 *Hittite cuneiform* deciphered by Hrozný.
- 1923 Woolley's excavations at Ur.
- 1928 Garstang's excavations at Jericho.
- 1930 *Ras Shamra Tablets* deciphered by Dhorme.
- 1934 Starkey's excavations at *Lachish* (Tell Duweir).

NOTE. The student must add a couple of years to each of the above dates, before he can expect to find the respective discoveries authoritatively digested and described in volume form.

APPENDIX VI

LIST OF BOOKS

HERE is a list of books bearing upon the subject of this volume. How far each book is up to date in its information may be roughly ascertained by comparing its year of publication with the Archaeological Calendar in Appendix V. Most of the books here named, if published at 8s. or over, can be borrowed (on payment of postage only) from the National Central Library for Students through any Public Lending Library, if a form is filled up giving the Title, Author, Publisher, and Date of Publication.

N.B.—Where no price is given, the book is probably out of print.

The place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

1. ONE-VOLUME COMMENTARIES, &c.

- C. GORE (Editor): *A New Commentary*. 1928. (16s.) S.P.C.K.
The Abingdon Commentary. (U.S.A.) 1929. (21s.) Epworth Press.
J. HASTINGS: *One-Volume Dictionary of the Bible*. 1909. (24s.)
T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh.
Helps to the Study of the Bible. (New Edit. 1931.) 8s. 6d. Oxford University Press.
G. PHILIP: *A Bible Atlas*. 1930. (1s.) S.P.C.K.

2. ARCHAEOLOGY

- F. HOMMEL: *Ancient Hebrew Tradition*. 1897. S.P.C.K.
H. V. HILPRECHT: *Exploration in Bible Lands*. 1903. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh.
S. R. DRIVER: *Modern Research as illustrating the Bible*. 1909. (6s.) Oxford University Press.
G. A. BARTON: *Archaeology and the Bible*. 1916. Philadelphia.
J. BAIKIE: *The Glamour of Near East Excavation*. 1927. (10s. 6d.) Seeley Service & Co., Ltd.
W. T. PILTER: *The Pentateuch; a historical record*. 1928. (31s. 6d. New edition 10s. 6d.) Marshall Bros.

- J. G. DUNCAN: *The Accuracy of the Old Testament*. 1930. (6s.) S.P.C.K.
 C. H. IRWIN: *The Bible, the Scholar, and the Spade*. 1932. (7s. 6d.) R.T.S.
 A. S. YAHUDA: *The Accuracy of the Bible*. 1932. (10s. 6d.) W. Heinemann, Ltd.
 C. MARSTON: *The New Knowledge about the Old Testament*. 1933. (5s.) Eyre & Spottiswoode, Ltd.
 C. MARSTON: *The Bible is True*. 1934. (7s. 6d.) Eyre & Spottiswoode, Ltd.
 J. A. HAMMERTON (Editor): *Wonders of the Past*. (W.O.P.) 1934. Amalgamated Press, Ltd.
 J. GARSTANG: *The Heritage of Solomon*. 1935. (20s.) Williams & Norgate, Ltd.

PERIODICALS:

- Proceedings of the Biblical Archaeological Society*. (P.B.A.S.)
Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society. (J.P.O.S.)
Journal of the Egyptian Archaeological Society. (J.E.A.S.)

3. ASSYRIA AND BABYLONIA

History

- A. T. OLMSTEAD: *History of Assyria*. 1923. (36s.) Scribner & Sons.
 E. A. W. BUDGE: *Babylonian Life and History*. 1925. (7s. 6d.) R.T.S.

Literature

- M. JASTROW: *Babylonian and Hebrew Tradition*. 1914 (10s. 6d.) T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd.
 F. HARPER: *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*. 1901. U.S.A.

Language

- L. W. KING: *The Assyrian Language*. 1901. Kegan Paul & Co., Ltd.

Archaeology

- B. T. A. EVETTS: *New Light on the Bible*. 1892. Cassell & Co., Ltd.
 T. G. PINCHES: *The Old Testament in the Light of the Records of Assyria and Babylonia*. 1902. S.P.C.K.
 A. JEREMIAS: *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*. Eng. Trans. 1911. Two vols. Williams & Norgate, Ltd.
 E. A. W. BUDGE: *Guide to Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum*. 1922. (2s. 6d.) British Museum.

4. EGYPT

History

- H. BRUGSCH: *History of Egypt*. Two vols. 1881. John Murray.
 J. H. BREASTED: *History of Egypt*. 1906. (42s.) Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd.

Literature

- A. ERMAN (trans. A. M. BLACKMAN). *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*. 1927. (21s.) Methuen & Co., Ltd.

Language

- A. H. GARDINER: *Egyptian Grammar*. 1927. (42s.) Oxford University Press.

Archaeology

- J. G. DUNCAN: *Exploration of Egypt and the Old Testament*. 1908. (42s.) Oliphants, Ltd.
 T. E. PEET: *Egypt and the Old Testament*. 1922. Liverpool University Press.
 J. H. BREASTED: *Ancient Records of Egypt*. 1927. Chicago University Press.
 A. F. KNIGHT: *Nile and Jordan*. 1933. (12s. 6d.) James Clarke & Co., Ltd.
 E. A. W. BUDGE: *Guide to Egyptian Collections in the British Museum*. 1930. (2s. 6d.) British Museum.

5. HISTORY

- G. MASPERO: i. *Dawn of Civilization*. 1894. (25s.) S.P.C.K.
 ii. *Struggle of Nations*. 1896. (25s.) S.P.C.K.
 iii. *Passing of Empires*. 1900. (21s.) S.P.C.K.
 R. Kittel: *History of the Hebrews*. Eng. Trans. 1899. Williams & Norgate, Ltd.
 G. W. WADE: *Old Testament History*. 1900. (8s. 6d.) Methuen & Co., Ltd.
 H. R. HALL: *Ancient History of Near East*. 1913. (21s.) Methuen & Co., Ltd.
Cambridge Ancient History. 1923-6. Cambridge University Press.
 i. Earliest Egypt and Babylonia. ii. Egyptian and Hittite Empires.
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